

Hafa Adai!

\$8.1M more in FEMA funds for Yutu recovery. **PAGE 2**
Visitor arrivals up 610% in November 2019. **PAGE 3**

75¢

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3,000 slots for CW workers added to spending bill

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) has included in the 2020 federal spending bill his legislation that would allow 3,000 more foreign workers available for typhoon recovery work and to prepare for

future storms in the Marianas.

Sablan's H.R. 4479, the Disaster Recovery Workforce Act, was added to the spending measure in full during last-minute negotiations over the weekend. The House and Senate will vote on the spend-

ing bill this week, sending it to the President for signature into law.

"With \$244 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery monies now available, as well as Economic Development Administration

grants for rebuilding our schools and programs like FEMA's Permanent House Construction all teed up, the last thing we want is any delay caused by a lack of workers," Sablan said. "We worked very

See CW on Page 4



Sablan

Collision sends one to ICU

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

A car collision at about 8pm Monday night across the Shell gas station in Puerto Rico, Saipan, left one person fighting for his life and two others with minor injuries.

According to Department of Public Safety spokesperson Dre Pangelinan, there were three individuals involved in the car accident.

A source told *Saipan Tribune* that the person who sustained major injuries is male

while the two with minor injuries are female.

The two females reportedly sustained minor injuries while the male remains in critical condition at the intensive care unit of the Commonwealth

See ICU on Page 4

5th double homicide since '95

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Based on police records, Friday's fatal shooting in San Antonio is the fifth double homicide on Saipan since 1995,

all of them involving Chinese nationals. All cases remain unsolved so far.

Although one of last week's victim, Li Na Lim, is a Korean national, the second victim, Linhua Cui, is of Chinese-Korean descent, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

When asked for comments about the unsolved double homicides, Department of Public Safety spokesman Adrian Pangelinan said yesterday that cold cases do not have a statute of limitation.

"So if there is a new lead or

See HOMICIDE on Page 4

8 more luxury villas done by the end of Dec.



Photo shows the main lobby of the Imperial Palace Resort, which is separate from the main lobby of the casino that has the 40-ton dragon on the ceiling that is made of 2.5 million Swarovski crystals.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

With the construction of Imperial Palace Resort's luxurious six villas or VIP suites already completed and recently turned over to operations for occupancy, the remaining eight villas are expected

See LUXURY on Page 4



Poon



INSIDE



LOCAL

The Veterans of Foreign Wars 3475 Post has recognized its own Teacher of the Year.

PAGE 5



BUSINESS

Jiang Zheng Group Inc. on Saipan is Eric Guo's first investment outside of China.

PAGE 14



WORLD

The body of a 16-year-old boy is hung from a traffic pole in a central Baghdad.

PAGE 17



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Local

\$8.1M more in FEMA funds for Super Typhoon Yutu recovery

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced yesterday more than \$8.1 million in additional disaster grants for the CNMI to support ongoing Super Typhoon Yutu recovery.

"This is very welcoming news for our residents on Saipan and Tinian. Lt. Gov. [Arnold I.] Palacios and I worked directly with Tinian Mayor [Edwin] Aldan after the typhoon on these key priorities on Tinian to repair the

Tinian Public Market, the Social Hall, and other community areas," said Torres. "We also worked with [the Public School System], the CNMI State Board of Education, and our education stakeholders on permanent repairs for schools on both islands, as well as funding permanent repairs on critical infrastructure. Lt. Gov. Palacios and I thank Mayor Aldan, our PSS leadership, and our community for working with us on these priority

projects. We look forward to continuing our partnership with FEMA as we build a stronger Marianas."

The award will assist 13 eligible applicants with reimbursement for eligible costs of debris removal, emergency protective measures, building replacements, replacement of damaged building contents and permanent repairs.

The additional funding consists of:

■ \$1,990,212, in federal

funding to the Tinian municipality for permanent repairs to the Tinian Public Market (\$1,969,644) and the Mayor's Social Hall (\$20,568).

■ \$1,715,895, in federal funding to PSS for permanent repairs to Tinian Elementary School (\$609,752), Garapan Elementary School (\$309,346), Saipan Southern High School (\$706,372), and Saipan administrative buildings (\$90,424).

■ \$1,599,306, in federal

funding to the Saipan municipality for permanent repairs to 10 buildings (274,817), 39 SUV's and six trucks (\$208,990), As Perdido Agricultural and Dog Quarantine building (\$354,352) and the Parks and Recreation facilities (\$412,189) and content damage. Additionally, permanent repairs for the Saipan municipality's road signs and traffic control devices (\$290,825) as well as 100% reimbursement for debris removal (\$58,130).

■ \$500,869, in federal funding to the Office of the Governor's Public Assistance Office for permanent repairs to Youth Affairs (\$331,532), Commonwealth Election Commission (33,570), Board of Parole (49,857), Development Disabilities Council (\$22,762), and Northern Marianas Housing Corp. buildings (63,147).

■ \$306,126, in federal funding to Saipan Community School for permanent repairs to building 1 (\$20,476), building 2 (\$245,460) and building 7 (\$40,189) and their contents.

■ \$1,548,723 in federal funding to the Commonwealth Ports Authority for permanent repairs to the Tinian Sea and Air Port building and building components (\$294,028) as well as 100% reimbursement for emergency protective measures (\$1,254,695).

■ \$157,672, in federal funding to Commonwealth Utilities Corp. for the replacement of vehicles and equipment repairs.

■ \$135,391, in federal fund-

ing to Northern Marianas College for permanent repairs to Tinian buildings and a vehicle.

■ \$68,715, in federal funding to Grace Christian Academy for permanent repairs to the building.

■ \$54,372, in federal funding to Saipan International School for management costs.

To date, FEMA has obligated a total of more than \$149 million in federal funding for Public Assistance projects related to Super Typhoon Yutu. The President authorized federal cost share for all categories of Public Assistance, at 90% of total eligible costs. In addition, federal cost share for debris removal and emergency protective measures was authorized at 100% for 180 days from the start of the incident.

These grants are funded through FEMA's Public Assistance program, which provides grant reimbursement to communities for expenses incurred in the immediate response and the recovery from a disaster. The grant applications in the CNMI are submitted by the Commonwealth, which coordinates the process with local governments.

FEMA obligates funding for these projects directly to the Commonwealth and it is the Commonwealth's responsibility to ensure the eligible sub-recipients receive this award.

Following its review process and upon receipt of appropriate documentation, the Commonwealth will provide funds to the sub-recipient on a reimbursable basis. (PR)

DFW supports bill banning chemicals harmful to coral

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The Department of Lands and Natural Resources, through its Division of Fish and Wildlife, has expressed support for a bill that would prohibit the importation of sunscreen containing chemicals that are deemed harmful to coral.

House Bill 21-28, HD1, which Rep. Ivan A. Blanco (R-Saipan) introduced, would ban the importation of sunscreens that contain oxybenzone, or BP-3, and octinoxate.

"This bill is important to marine life," said DFW director Manny M. Pangelinan.

Research has shown that both oxybenzone and octinoxate are highly toxic chemicals that kill juvenile coral. These chemicals are also blamed for increasing coral bleaching—making them vulnerable to stress even at temperatures below 87.8°F—and cause genetic damage to coral and other

marine organisms.

"It is [our] job to make sure that whatever is being introduced into the water will protect coral species and fish. It is our job to protect the corals. Coral provides habitat for fish," Pangelinan said.

Pangelinan explained that the chemicals find their way to the sea through people swimming and when people wash themselves. The chemicals also enter the waters through wastewater effluent.

Pangelinan said that enforcement of the ban should be at the port of entry and in stores, where sunscreen labels should be checked, and if found that it has the chemicals, would have to be removed.

"The DFW welcomes the bill. We already have a lot of challenges besides climate change and coral bleaching. We [will not allow] our coral to die because of chemicals that are being continuously introduced into the water," he said.

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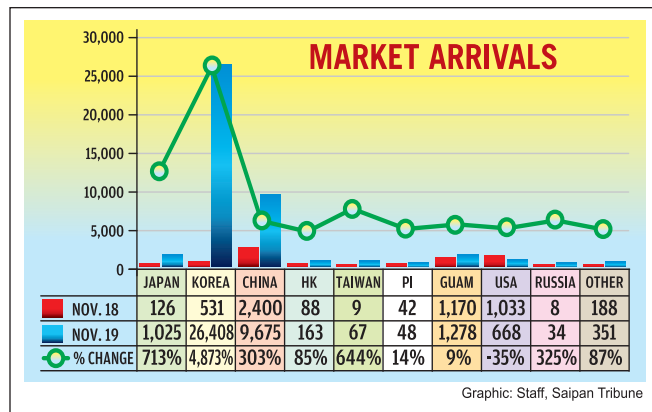
Visitor arrivals up 610% in November 2019

Arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota increased 610% to 39,717 visitors in November 2019, compared to 5,595 visitors in November 2018, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority.

Visitor arrivals in November 2018 were extremely low due to the closure of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for most of the month last year following Super Typhoon Yutu.

Arrivals from Korea grew 4,873% in the month to 26,408 visitors, higher than even November 2017. Asiana Airlines added a daily daytime flight beginning on Oct. 27 that will continue through late March 2020. Also, T'Way Air began a second daily daytime flights to Saipan on Nov. 21, which will also continue through late March 2020.

Arrivals from China increased to 9,675 visitors in November to mark a 303% increase compared to 2018, but a 40% decline compared to 2017, which had 16,168 visitors. China is being hurt by the trade war with the United States; the country's third-quarter economic growth slowed more than expected to 6% year-on-year, marking its weakest pace in almost three decades. In China's traditional



low season for outbound tourism, the market is also suffering from continued tension in Hong Kong, a tightened parole policy visa-free travel to the Marianas for Chinese tourists, and a continuing high exchange rate. In order to reduce costs, major charter flight operators cut capacity between Chinese cities to Saipan in November, and more cuts are planned for December 2019.

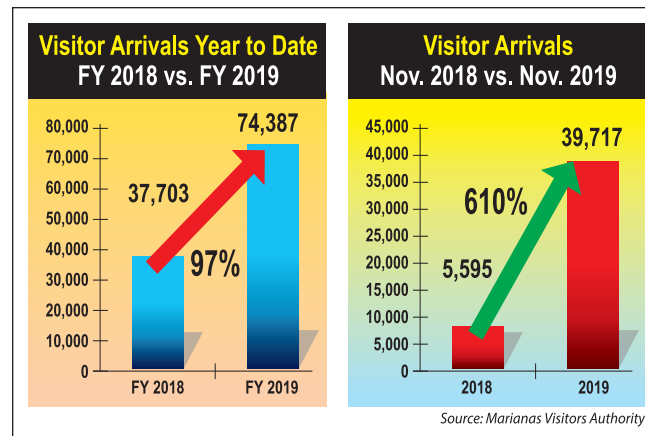
Visitor arrivals from Japan grew 713% to 1,025 visitors in November on the wings of daily, direct flights launched by Skymark Airlines on Nov. 29 from Tokyo-Narita to Saipan. Skymark is offering promotional rates starting at \$38 one-way plus fuel surcharge and tax. Approximately 40,000 visitors are expected from Japan in fiscal year 2020, based on 80% load factor on scheduled flights; this com-

pared to 12,000 visitors from the source market in fiscal year 2019.

Economic highlights

According to Statistics Korea, South Korea's consumer prices rose 0.2% in November, marking the first gain in four months. The November reading followed zero growth in October and the first negative inflation rate in September that had sparked fears of deflation; however, the November inflation rate was below market expectations. The average U.S. dollar/won exchange rate in November was 1,188.92 won, an increase from the previous rate of 1,186.40 won in October.

In China in October 2019, the consumer price index increased by 3.8% year-on-year. According to Euromonitor International, China is expected



to suffer more than the U.S. in outbound tourism over the next five years under a scenario of a heightening trade war between the world's two largest economies. (PR)

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Warning out vs rip currents and rough seas

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through Sunday. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Meanwhile, a small craft advisory remains in effect through Sunday. This means that wind speeds of 15 to 25 knots with gusts up to 30 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

The risk of rip currents is present along east facing reefs in Guam and the CNMI and could extend to north facing reefs.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, the public is advised to stay away from the reef line. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. Swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call for wave for help.

Avoid venturing out along east facing reefs and beaches. Huge pounding waves can knock you down and cause se-

rious injuries. Strong rip currents will be life threatening.

Meanwhile, a trade-wind surge is producing fresh to strong winds and rough seas in coastal waters.

East to northeast winds of 20 to 25 knots and combined seas of 8 to 10 feet will produce hazardous conditions for operators of small craft. Highest winds and seas will be east of the islands.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid sailing in these conditions. (Saipan Tribune)



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LUXURY

From Page 1

to be done by the end of this month, according to IPI's assistant vice president of construction Eric Poon.

There will be a total of 15 villas, including the presidential suite, which is basically a duplex. The villas are located on the east wing of IPI's casino-resort project in western Garapan.

Poon is expected to discuss and show progress photos of the resort at the Commonwealth Casino Commission's board meeting tomorrow, Thursday.

"This is one of the big milestones for IPI," said Poon, referring to the completion of the villas.

He assured the completion of the project—"construction is absolutely ongoing"—in reaction to questions whether IPI could finish it because of the ongoing Federal Bureau of Investigation's probe and a search at IPI's accounting office.

"As a matter of fact, we are already moving up to the hotel tower," Poon said.

Last Saturday, IPI granted *Saipan Tribune's* request for a tour of the completed villas, with Poon and IPI senior vice president Donald Browne, along with other IPI management, leading the tour.

A grand custom-made chandelier, which was designed and installed by a special team from a Czech Republic-based firm, greets guests as they walk into the main lobby of the resort hotel.

Poon said it's the same Czech company who did the 40-ton dragon chandelier in the casino lobby area, which is covered with 2.5 million Swarovski crystals.

Tucked into a corner of the hotel lobby is a reception desk and a little coffee shop, where guests can come in, relax, and have tea or coffee.

"It's very cozy over here. ...It's different from the dragon lobby in the casino area," Poon said.

An added attraction in the resort villa's main lobby is a fish pond.

On top of the east wing building are the beachfront villas that have one-of-a-kind amenities. Each villa or suite has two master bedrooms with king-sized beds. Within each bedroom is a full bathroom



Each villa has a custom-made infinity-edge swimming pool.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



One of the two master bedrooms with cozy king-sized bed in a villa. The curtain can be operated automatically through a panel control.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

and a bathtub.

The bathroom has custom hand-made mosaic from Italy. The chandeliers in the master bedrooms and tiny details are all custom-made. Even the door hinges are all decorated with gold plated finishes. The curtain is automatic and controlled by a panel.

Adjoining the living room is a dining room and a bar. The flooring has onyx marble (similar to a gemstone). There is a massage room and a private gaming room.

Outside the villas are infinity-edged swimming pools.

Poon said a standard villa measures over 3,000 square feet.

He said the interior finishes were selected to make sure that the quality is right and fit the overall theme.

"If you look at the alignment, everything is all aligned," said Poon, pointing to the marble floor.

Poon said he believes no one can

find this type of high quality, high standard finishes anywhere within this region.

He said that IPI hired interior designers from all over the world—from France, Las Vegas, and Hong Kong.

IPI has been planning to announce the opening of the villas this month.

Construction on the presidential villa, which will be a duplex, is targeted to be done by the end of May 2020. Construction has already started on the roof and waterproofing installation is in progress.

Poon said the target is to finish the tower by the end of January 2020.

Poon said they just started two shifts, seven days a week to try to complete cladding installation of the building facade and the roof, among other things.

He said the plan is to build a total of 344 rooms, including the 15 villas.

Based on the casino licensing agreement's amendment six, comple-

Workforce Act last year—from being passed over for jobs or from having their wages reduced by competition from foreign workers—will apply to the new disaster recovery workers.

The workers can be recruited from any country on the Department of Homeland Security's approved list for 2018, which includes the Philippines.

Sablan introduced the Disaster Recovery Workforce Act in September, after it became apparent that a lack of construction workers was slowing recovery. Both the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands made a case for the extra workforce and supported Sablan's bill.

Sablan pushed the bill through the House Natural Resources Committee earlier this month with bipartisan agreement. He secured a waiver of jurisdiction from the House Judiciary

Committee for his bill 10 days ago and has been pushing for inclusion as a rider in the fiscal year 2020 appropriation ever since.

FEMA officials, who broke ground on the first house in their Permanent Housing Construction program in September, noted that a lack of workers was a constraint. FEMA had briefed Sablan six months earlier of their plans to start the program and build brand-new, concrete houses for as many as 500 families. Some families have dropped off the waiting list because of the delay in starting the program.

"Now that a lack of workers should not be a problem, I want to see FEMA speed things up. People need to get out of the tents and into real houses that can withstand any future storms," Sablan said. "The Disaster Recovery Workforce Act makes that possible." (PR)

tion of the entire casino-resort project is Feb. 28, 2021.

When asked if they have enough manpower to complete the project, Poon said that getting construction workers is not fast enough. He said it's taking time to get the schedule for the interview for H-2B visa workers at the U.S. Embassy in Mongolia and Turkey.

"But we have people coming here from Turkey and also Mongolia," said Poon, adding that for Turkey and Mongolia they have to manage their own workers and also have translators too.

IPI assistant director for hotel operations Xiaoling Tao said the operations for the completed four villas started last week and that they are right now focused on staff training and are working on different teams.

"Challenges are always there, but we find solutions so we aim to improve every day," she said.

She said majority of their personnel are local hires, are very dedicated, and are eager to learn.

IPI assistant director for housekeeping and public area, Choump Luangphinit, said that four rooms are being tested daily "to tweak out all area of services, making sure everything we have in the rooms function correctly." Luangphinit said that training is being done on the four suites and the other two are being tweaked or have some minor upgrading "to make the guests' visit more memorable."

The actual number for occupancy permit is six villas.

Luangphinit said all service should be up to par with international luxury hotel service requirement.

Before a baby can run he/she need to learn how to walk first, he added. "There always a challenge when you open a new property and that's why we are here to make sure all issues are addressed before our guests arrive. This is how we will perfect our brand new property here on Saipan," he said.

"We will continue to test everything to make sure our guest will experience their stay here at IPR without any inconvenience and we earn their trust," Luangphinit said.



The bathtub has Italian mosaic.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

ICU

From Page 1

Health Center. The man was confirmed alive as of 3:34pm press time yesterday.

A *Saipan Tribune* source said that, after the man was rushed to CHC, he was brought into the operating room for emergency surgery at about 9:30pm and remained in surgery for four hours due to the severity of his injuries.

Shell surveillance footage that was leaked on social media showed an SUV speeding through Puerto Rico just across Shell at 7:59pm as a sedan turned slowly into the gas station. The SUV collided with the passenger side of the sedan, sending it flying backwards as the SUV continued forward before hitting a nearby power pole.

Commonwealth Utility Corp. line-

men were called to the scene to ensure that the power pole did not fall over, preventing a possible power outage in the area or affecting other connected power poles. Four police vehicles were dispatched to the scene, along with two Emergency Medical Service ambulances and tow trucks.

According to a lineman who was at the scene Monday evening and early yesterday morning, they are sure the SUV collided with the power pole with great force because it caused the sturdy pole to crack at its base, nearly knocking it over completely.

CUC had to return in the morning to secure the impacted pole's base and adjust the connected power poles in the area because the force of impact also affected the main pole across Shell.

DPS has yet to release additional information on the incident.

CW

From Page 1

hard this year for those disaster recovery funds and now, getting the labor needed to put that money to work, should mean the Commonwealth government and private individuals and businesses in the Marianas have everything we need to finish rebuilding from Mangkhut and Yutu."

Sablan's Disaster Recovery Workforce Act provides the 3,000 new CW permits this year and in 2021 and 2022. The CW permits may only be issued for construction work related to recovery from a presidentially declared major disaster or emergency, such as Typhoon Mangkhut or Super Typhoon Yutu, or to prepare for a future disaster or emergency.

All the protections for U.S. workers that Sablan wrote into his U.S.

HOMICIDE

From Page 1

new information on the case, DPS reopens the case," Pangelinan said.

Lim, 43, and Cui, 53, were found dead inside the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant Friday morning after they were reportedly shot by still unidentified person/s. Police said the victims' shoulder bags could not be found at the crime scene.

DPS did not release yesterday new information about the recent killing.

Police records show that the bodies of Guo Huang Xu and his wife, Qing Xiu Zheng, were found burned

in their As Gonno house that was razed to the ground by fire last Feb. 23, 2014.

Nine months later, on Nov. 2, 2014, two Chinese male farmers—Hai Ren Li and Cheng You Li—were found dead, their bodies dumped in a grassy area at the old airport runway in Koblerville.

On Dec. 8, 2012, couple Jun Li Yang and Jing Liu were shot dead inside their home in San Vicente.

In March 1995, Zhao Ming Hou and his wife, Yu Hua Huang, who were then-owners of Ming Hua Market in Dandan, were found dead in separate areas in Kagman 3. Prior to the discovery of their bodies, their store was burglarized.

Lee is named VFW's Teacher of the Year

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Veterans of Foreign Wars 3475 Post, which has its own Teacher of the Year award to recognize teachers for teaching Americanism and patriotism, recognized last Dec. 16 a fifth-grade teacher from Kobleville Elementary School as its overall winner of the award, topping two other teachers who were up for the honor.

VFW 3475 Post gave its Teacher of the Year award to Damiana Lee, who will be the second teacher from the CNMI to represent the Asia-Pacific region in Washington, D.C. at the VFW nationals contest.

The two other nominees for the local award were Dr. Charles Algaier of Marianas High School, who won in the high school division, and Victor Cabrera of Hopwood Jr High School, who won in the middle school division.

Lee got a combined prize of \$700. Algaier won \$100 and

Cabrera won \$100.

When asked about how she felt about getting the award, Lee said, "I felt humbled and surprised but nervous because, wow, I'm going to be representing that many people."

Lee is expecting to return from Washington, D.C. with ideas on how she can further help the community. That comes in the wake of how she and her sister tried to help the community after Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018. Lee also spends her time after school helping kids in need of tutoring.

The VFW also gave out awards to those who competed in the Voice of Democracy, a speaking contest, and the Patriot's Pen competition, a writing contest.

For the Voice of Democracy, Victoria Dela Cruz of Marianas High School, who placed second in 2017, won first place and \$250 this year. She was the only qualifying entry for the VOD.

For the Patriot's Pen contest, Yilliana Poquiz of Brilliant Star School won \$150 and first place, Anna Marie Desey from Saipan International School won \$100 and came in second place, Grace

Quichocho, also from Saipan International School, came in third place and won \$75.

The VFW Teacher of the Year award contest recognizes three exceptional teachers for their outstanding commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their stu-

dents. Each year, a certified/licensed elementary, junior high and high school teacher whose curriculum focuses on citizenship education topics can be nominated for the national contest, which is called the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education

Teacher Award. Winners of this contest receive \$1,000 for professional development expenses, \$1,000 for his/her school, two award plaques for the teacher and his/her school, and an all-expenses-paid trip to attend the VFW conference to receive the award.



Damiana Lee, third from the left, poses with her family as she receives the Veterans of Foreign Wars' Teacher of the Year award last Monday at VFW Post 3457 in Garapan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CW fee revolving fund bill out of House committee

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives' Ways and Means Committee paved the way yesterday for the full House to vote on a bill that would create a Commonwealth Worker Fee Revolving Fund that specifies who gets the authority over the fee that is collected from CNMI employers when they hire a foreign worker.

CNMI employers pay U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \$200 for each foreign employee they hire. US-

CIS then turns over a portion of that money to the CNMI government.

House Bill 2191, introduced by committee chair Rep. Ivan Blanco (R-Saipan), will create the revolving fund and designate the Labor secretary as the fund's expenditure authority.

The Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act of 2018—or U.S. Public Law 115-218—was passed, in part, to incentivize the hiring of the U.S. workers in the CNMI, and certain fees collected pursuant to this law are trans-

ferred to the CNMI government for the sole and exclusive purpose of funding vocational education, apprenticeships, or other training programs for U.S. workers.

"A certain amount of that [Commonwealth worker fee] is dedicated for the CNMI to use to train U.S. eligible workers in the vocational skills, trade skills, mechanics, construction," said Blanco.

He said the bill is also to clarify that it is the Labor secretary that is the expenditure authority of those funds, and nobody else.

"The bill is to say, from henceforth [from its enactment], the secretary of Labor will be in charge of these money," Blanco said.

He said that when U.S. Public Law 115-218 was enacted, the expenditure authority was first given to the CNMI Department of Labor, then the CNMI Scholarship Office, and then back to Labor, "so it provides confusion to... the recipients of the money" such as the Northern Marianas Trades Institute, the Northern Marianas College, and Public School System.

"As you may be aware in the news lately, there was an

article regarding the possible shutdown of the NMTI and, with the passage of this bill, we believe that we can reverse those type of instances outright," said Labor administrative hearing officer Jacqueline Nicolas.

"In order to avoid any kind of delay in making sure our educational entities are fully-funded, we hope that this bill would be passed," she added.

H.B. 21-91, when enacted, would establish a special fund within the Commonwealth Treasury, which shall be known and designated as the Commonwealth Worker Fee Revolving Fund, to be ac-

counted for separately from the general fund.

Under the bill, funds collected pursuant to the NMI Workforce Act shall be deposited into the revolving fund every fiscal year, which will exclusively be used to fund vocational education, apprenticeships, or other training programs for U.S. workers, as identified in the approved Governor's Plan under the NMI Workforce Act.

The revolving fund monies shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation and without fiscal year limitations.

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Kilili: \$120 million for Marianas Medicaid

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Medicaid funding for the Marianas will increase to \$60 million both this year and next, according to a statement yesterday from the office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

Currently, the Marianas is getting \$6.9 million.

In addition, the federal share for Medicaid will go from 55 percent to 83 percent, a better

» Federal share jumps from 55 to 83 percent

federal/local contribution rate than for any U.S. state.

"This is good news for the 15,000-plus people in the Marianas who have Medicaid for their health insurance," Sablan said. "They will not only continue to receive care,

but they should also be able to receive an expanded range of services with all of this extra money that we are making available.

This is also good news for everyone who uses the Commonwealth Health Center, Sablan said, as CHC would not be able to stay open without Medicaid to pay the bills. Last month, the Commonwealth Health Care Corp., which

runs CHC, reported that 44 percent of its revenue is from Medicaid.

"It is also good news for private health care providers in the Marianas, who have not been able to serve Medicaid patients since June 1 of this year," Sablan said. "I urge the governor to now allow those private practice clinics



Sablan

and pharmacies to begin taking Medicaid patients again. That will make those private businesses more economically viable and strengthen the entire health care system in our islands."

Sablan has been working for years to prepare for the day when the \$109 million in extra Medicaid money he got for Marianas Medicaid in the 2010 Affordable Care Act would be gone. This year, the final year of ACA funding, Sablan used his powers as vice chair of the House Natural Resources Committee to bring Medicaid directors from the five insular areas to Congress for a hearing on the funding "cliff" they all faced.

He also successfully added a \$36 million amendment for Marianas Medicaid to the disaster aid bill passed in June. That money paid outstanding bills owed to over 30 health care providers in the Marianas, including \$19 million to the hospital.

And he lobbied the Department of Health and Human Services for more funding, which resulted in May in a reconciliation of previous years' grants and a supplemental award for the Marianas, totaling \$8.2 million.

ing \$8.2 million.

Sablan's hearing in May encouraged the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid, to hold its own hearing in June. And that was quickly followed in July with a bipartisan agreement by the committee to increase Medicaid for all the insular areas and lower the percentage that insular governments would have to match against the federal dollars.

Sablan continued to lead the effort to fix the Medicaid problem for the insular areas

with a letter from all the insular area representatives to House leaders last week and by speaking personally to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi about the dire circumstances that the Marianas faced.

Sablan's goal was to include funding for insular Medicaid, as the House, Senate, and White House negotiated a fiscal year 2020 spending deal in these final days of the year.

The effort proved successful. Text of the spending deal was released yesterday after a weekend of drafting activity. The House is expected to vote to pass fiscal year 2020 appropriations, including the money for Marianas Medicaid on Wednesday. (PR)

AK launches 2020 Toyota Dream Car contest

Atkins Kroll announced yesterday the launch of the 2020 Toyota Dream Car Art Contest.

Children are often asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" or "How can you change the world if you could?" The Toyota Dream Car Art Contest opens a door for children to answer these and more questions through art and creativity. While the contest asks children to draw their "dream car," the results represent not only the future of automobiles but also the future of the world, and a bright one at that.

"In past contests, we've seen cars with giant vacuums that clean the pollution in the ocean and flying cars that assist the elderly. The Toyota Dream Car Art Contest fuels the imagination of our chil-

dren and encourages them to pursue their dreams. It's important to us at AK to continue holding the contest year after year," said Alex Hammett, Atkins Kroll president.

While Japan will not be conducting its Annual Toyota Dream Car Art Contest due to the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, AK has Toyota's support to hold the contest in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands for children ages 5 to 15 years.

Last year, 388 students from Guam and over 130 students from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota entered inspiring art pieces into the contest. AK looks forward to seeing even more entries come 2020.

Students are welcome to submit their entries at Atkins Kroll Toyota in Tamuning and

on Saipan. Deadline to submit all entries is 5pm on Friday, Feb. 28, 2020.

The contest is open to students in the following age categories: Under 7 years; 8-11 years; and 12-15 years. Students are encouraged to create their "dream car" using any standard drawing medium (color pencils, crayons, watercolors or markers) on an 11" (height) x 17" (width) paper with a thickness of 5mm maximum. Digital art mediums are restricted. AK Toyota is looking for hand-drawn colorful artwork that illustrates "My Dream Car."

More information regarding an exhibition of the art pieces is pending.

For more information, contact Ernie Galito at (671) 648-8400 or ernie.galito@AK-guam.com. (PR)



WINNING FLOAT

Green Meadow School's Nutcracker-inspired float gets ready for last Saturday's Christmas in the Marianas' Parade of Lights at the Garapan Fishing Base. GMS won second place in the float competition.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director

EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CUC-RFP-20-004

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2019, 2020 & 2021

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for services of a U.S. Certified Public Accounting Firm/Individual with knowledge, skill, and experience in auditing (1) financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards of the U.S. and; (2) federal awards programs in accordance with the Single Audit Act and U.S. Office of Management and Budget requisites

- Provide assistance to the CUC management with the preparation of the annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Ensure that the financial statements and auditor's reports also meet any specific requirements contained in agreements or other contractual requirements relative to financial statement presentation and the audits.
- Submit the draft financial statements and accompanying auditor's reports to CUC management no later than January 31st of each year, and issue the final reports no later than February 28th of each year.
- Provide 15 bound copies of the final financial statements and accompanying auditor's report
- Provide an electronic copy (e.g., .pdf format) of the final report to the CUC.

Auditors are responsible to review the 2019, 2020 & 2021 financial statements to include the physical CUC assets for each fiscal year.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set. The \$100 package fee will be waived for firms that had previously registered and paid for a CUC-RFP-19-037 package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Proposal & One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate sealed envelopes marked "CUC-RFP-20-004, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2019, 2020 & 2021" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **December 23, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional RFP will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 10, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address.manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Greg Cruz, CUC Chief Financial Officer, via email address.greg.cruz@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLON
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CNMI GOVERNMENT

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIRPORT FIRE STATION ROLL UP DOOR REPLACEMENT PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-001-20 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting for sealed proposals for procurement, delivery and installation of eight (8) aluminum brand new roll up doors for the bays located at the Airport Fire Station at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. The work shall include all design, materials, labor and equipment necessary to achieve the finished products, along with testing and commissioning in compliance with the items in the scope of work.

The Scope of Work (SOW) may be picked up at the CPA Administration Office at no cost. Project approach and cost must be within the parameters of the established SOW. Any deviation from the SOW, a proposal based on reduced SOW or a proposal that exceeded what is required by the SOW, may be grounds for immediate disqualification of the offeror's proposal package.

A site visit may be requested by each proposer and will be coordinated with the CPA's Airport Fire Chief, Frederick Pangelinan at telephone number 670-288-0091.

Questions shall be submitted in writing to Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager via hand delivery to the CPA Administration Office or via email at wprater@cpa.gov.mp or cpa.engr@pticom.com by no later than 5:00 p.m., **Monday January 13, 2020**. All responses to questions or requests for information will be provided to all proposers who have picked up a proposal package.

Proposers shall submit one original and four (4) copies of the proposals, sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for Procurement, Delivery and Installation of Eight Roll Up Doors for Airport Fire Station at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, CPA-SA-001-20". Proposals must be submitted no later than **5:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2020**, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport.

PROPOSERS SHALL PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO ALL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS DETAILED IN THE SCOPE OF WORK, AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP AS DETAILED ABOVE.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: December 17, 2019

SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMCS 9901 et seq., as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance December 19, 2019 at 9:30 am at the SHEFA Office Conference Room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oheai, Beach Road, Saipan

AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters**
 1. Roll Call
 2. Adoption of Agenda
 3. Adoption of Minutes from October 30th, 2019
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Reports**
 1. Administrator
 2. Chair
 3. Committee
 - a. Committee on Awards
 - b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/Forbearance
 - c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
 - d. Committee on Program and Development
 - e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative and Community Affairs
- IV. Old Business**
 1. Amendment to SHEFA Bylaws
 2. H.L.B. 20-28
- V. New Business**
 1. Fall 2019 Application Status
 2. 2019 SHEFA Annual Report
- VI. Executive Session – Legal Memorandum on SLL No. 21-5 Relative to SHEFA Program Funding**
- VII. Misc.**
- VIII. Next Meeting**
- IX. Adjournment**

*Note: Meeting may continue the following day should the need arise.
P.O. Box 10001, PHB 3648 Saipan, MP 96950-8901
Tel: (670) 235-5995/235-1020/21 • Telefax: 235-5996
E-mail: saipanshefa@gmail.com • Website: www.saipanshefa.net*

\$1,000 reward for information on Guam pet poisoner

GUAM—Guam Animals In Need announced yesterday a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest or grand jury indictment of the person responsible for a string of deadly pet poisonings in Merizo.

Twenty pets—18 dogs and

two cats—belonging to three families living on Quinene Road in Merizo have died under suspicious circumstances since mid-November. Dr. Lisa Silk of Isla Veterinary Clinic confirmed that blood work and clinical analyses complet-

ed on two pets show evidence of antifreeze poisoning.

Just weeks before Christmas, the families of the killed pets are devastated by their losses. “Our pets were intentionally poisoned and the mere fact that our neighbors—just

a quarter mile radius from our street—had pets that expired in the same way...is not isolated at all. It was blatant, done with malice and was downright cruel,” said Cathy Champaco, the owner of two poisoned pets.

“Why would anyone poi-

son family pets? This is a horrific, senseless act,” said GAIN board president Cyrus Luhr. “It’s a felony to poison a dog or cat, and we hope this reward will bring about swift justice.”

The reward money comes from a GAIN donor who

wishes to remain anonymous.

Anyone with information about these violent crimes is urged to contact GPD, GAIN at 653-4246, or the Guam Crime Stoppers at 477-HELP (4357) or guam.crimestopper-sweb.com. (PR)

5,400 lbs of garbage collected in 2019

PDM Promoters conducted its final cleanup of the year last Dec. 9 at the Paseo De Marianas and its running total for garbage collected in 2019 is now 5,400 lbs.

The non-profit’s 37 volunteers hauled a total of 240 lbs of rubbish last CNMI Constitution Day. The group normally conducts its monthly cleanups on Saturdays, but since Monday was a holiday and Saturdays are quite busy due to the Christmas in the Marianas event, they decided to do the cleanup that day, according to PDM Promoters coordinator Sonia Siwa.

The volunteers, made up of 31 members of the Saipan Awaodori Team and six Kinpachi restaurant staff, started their cleanup at 9am and it encompassed the areas of Paseo de Marianas, Coral Tree Avenue, AMP Road,

Beach Road, and their connecting alleyways.

Siwa said she’s appreciative of the youth from the Saipan Awaodori Team who never fail to volunteer during their monthly cleanup drives.

“We can say these young volunteers learn something from their experience. We let them know that these cleanups are necessary to keep our place clean and attractive, not only for the residents but also for our visitors,” she said.

December’s 240-lb garbage haul was tied with April as the lowest of the year. For the record, the biggest came in May (690 lbs), followed by March and August (660 lbs), October (580 lbs), February (500 lbs), January (460 lbs), September (440 lbs), June (360 lbs), July (300 lbs), and November (280 lbs).

PDM Promoters’ monthly cleanups are usually held

every Saturday and are supported by the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality and the non-profit’s major sponsors, T Galleria and TSL Foundation.

Siwa said T Galleria and TSL Foundation’s support enables them to have the cleaning materials needed. Kinpachi Restaurant provides the meal and snacks for the volunteers.

Volunteers of PDM Promoters will be at it again in January when it conducts its first monthly cleanup of 2020. (Mark Rabago)

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PDM Promoters conducted its final cleanup of the year last Dec. 9 at the Paseo De Marianas and its running total for garbage collected in 2019 is now 5,400 lbs. Photo shows volunteers posing for a group shot after hauling 690 lbs of trash last May.



Commonwealth Zoning Board JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

The Zoning Office is seeking qualified applicants for the following position. These are full-time positions on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Zoning Enforcement Tech (3)

Duties and Responsibilities:

Conduct field surveys; Collect land use information; Prepare and serve notices of violation and other compliance documents; Write follow-up enforcement notices; Maintain enforcement database and files; Prepare enforcement reports, Perform other related duties as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

A minimum of 2 years background in the following:

Any combination of land use planning, zoning, public administration, public health & safety, business management, public policy, natural resource management, environmental management, land management, regulatory and permitting enforcement or related field; Proficiency with office software including MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook Explorer. Other desired experiences include ability to drive a stick-shift car and to walk into construction sites and across rough terrain; ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; and ability to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends. Applicant must have a valid CNMI Driver’s License.

The salary will start at \$25,000. Health, life and retirement benefits are provided. Information about the Zoning Board and the Zoning Office may be viewed at the Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp. Application submittals should be addressed to the Zoning Enforcement Chief. Submittals may be sent via e-mail, FAX, U.S. mail, or hand delivered to the address below. Submittals must include a letter of interest, a CNMI Application For Employment, and a resume. The Application for Employment may be picked up from the Zoning Office or the Office of Personnel Management. Applicants must be US citizens, permanent residents or immediate relatives. Please send submittals to the Acting Zoning Administrator: E-mail: Yubert.Alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp or deliver to the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

The deadline to receive applications and all requirements is Tuesday, December 24, 2019 at 3:00pm.



Commonwealth Zoning Board (Zoning Office) JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Zoning Officer

The Zoning Office is seeking a qualified applicant for the position of Zoning Officer. This is a full-time position on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Duties and Responsibilities: Process permit applications including reviewing applications for compliance, tracking timelines and public notice requirements, coordinating interagency consultations, and preparing written recommendations; Conduct field surveys and inspections for compliance with the Zoning Law and to collect land use information; Educate and inform the public and applicants about the zoning program and permit requirements; Gather information to update the GIS; Maintain detailed records of all actions, using paper and electronic media; Update permit information on the database; Other duties as assigned.

Minimum Requirements: Graduation from an accredited two-year college or university with an AA Degree. The following professional experience may substitute for the AA Degree: A minimum of 3 years of experience in any combination of land use planning, zoning, public administration, public health, business management, public policy, natural resource management, environmental management, land management, or related field; Proficiency with office software including MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook Explorer. Other desired experiences include ability to drive a stick-shift car and to walk into construction sites and across rough terrain; Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; Ability to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends; Ability to speak in Chamorro or Carolinian a plus. Applicant must have a valid CNMI Driver’s License.

The salary is \$28,000.00. Information about the Zoning Board and the Zoning Office may be viewed at the Zoning Board website: www.zoning.gov.mp. Application submittals should be addressed to the Acting Zoning Administrator. Submittals may be sent via e-mail, FAX, U.S. mail, or hand delivered to the address below. Submittals must include a letter of interest, a CNMI Application for Employment, and a resume. The Application for Employment may be picked up from the Zoning Office or the Office of Personnel Management. Applicants must be US citizens, permanent residents or immediate relatives. Please send submittals to: E-mail: Yubert.Alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp or to the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan.

The deadline to receive applications and all requirements is Tuesday, December 24, 2019 at 3:00pm.

The long road from French super yachts to USCG cutters

For some people, joining any military branch is never really a choice. They've dreamt of putting on the uniform since before they can remember. Others, it may be just a way to get out of mom and dad's house once they graduated high school or out of a bad neighborhood.

For those who serve, there's the obvious question once you complete a contract: Do I stay or go? Some can't wait to return home after being away, and others are just ready to be in the civilian world again. Then, of course, you have those that decide to make the military a career. Going career happens in the U.S. Coast Guard more than any other branch, with a retention rate steadily above

90%. Most people who join the Coast Guard stay in the Coast Guard, even if that wasn't their original plan.

For Petty Officer 3rd Class Morgan Harnay, his road to joining the Coast Guard is one-of-a-kind.

Harnay was born in a small town, Athis-Mons, which is about 40 minutes south of Paris, France. For most of his life, he lived in a small fishing town, St. Raphael, in southern France. There are several historical connections to the U.S. and World War II in the area, but being a member of the U.S. military was never even a thought to Harnay growing up, much less a possibility.

Living near the water, it was nearly inevitable he would make a life at sea one

way or another. Eventually, he began working on superyachts. There aren't any official agreed-upon definitions for these crafts, but the term is typically used to describe large luxurious, professionally crewed, motor, or sailing yachts ranging from 130 to 590 feet.

After years of working on yachts, Harnay received word the superyacht on which he was the first officer was up for sale. The crew was instructed to take the ship to the Miami boat show. This event happens to be one of the largest boat shows in the world. The superyacht was almost guaranteed to sell.

Harnay and the rest of the crew flew to Miami, and a few days later, the yacht ar-



COAST GUARD SECTOR HONOLULU

Petty Officer 3rd Class Morgan Harnay has gone from being a deck officer on super yachts to being a machinery technician in the Coast Guard. Harnay now spends his free time on liberty as a captain of a dinner cruise yacht.

rived. It didn't take long for it to go off the market. The ship sold to an American couple who gave the whole crew the option to return home or stay on working for them. He and a few other members quickly agreed. In doing so, the American couple agreed to sponsor the crew for green cards.

It wasn't long after that Harnay received the news that due to the new owners being American and the vessel registry now out of the U.S., they were subject to U.S. regulations. One of those regulations was that Harnay was no longer qualified to be a deck officer on the yacht as he was not a U.S. citizen.

The owners wanted Harnay to stay but, unfortunately, after trying it out as a crewmember for about a year and a half, it just wasn't working for him. The couple agreed they would still sponsor Harnay if he decided to leave his employment aboard the yacht.

"I took some time to decide what I wanted to do with my life," said Harnay. There were lots of changes during this time. He was now married, had a child, and transitioned to making a living as a boxing coach.

After a year and a half in Miami, he began to miss life on the water and looked for ways to get back into the yachting world. That's when a friend mentioned the U.S. Coast Guard. Three weeks later, he was speaking with a recruiter, and five months after that, he was standing on

a yellow triangle enduring his first day in boot camp at Cape May, New Jersey.

"The first two weeks were interesting because my English was not what it is today. In Miami, it's a lot of immigrants and a lot of different accents, which makes it easy," said Harnay. "I was trying to copy what I was seeing around me. It took about two weeks for them to understand I was French."

At that time, the 32-year-old Harnay had gone from being a first officer on a superyacht to a non-rated fireman who just graduated from boot camp with a core group almost half his age. After that, it was off to his first unit.

"I was sent to an ATON unit in Long Island, New York," Harnay said. "I was a fireman, so I spent my time moving buoys around, swapping for the winter season and summer season. The transition was pretty hard, but that's what I wanted, so I was cool with it."

After about a year in Long Island, the opportunity arose to go to "A-school" and become a machinery technician. "I wanted to learn about the engineering side of things," said Harnay.

When he completed school, there was an opportunity to go to Hawaii. His duty station is part of the Naval Support Division, which is part of sector engineering in Honolulu. Harnay and the rest of the NSD provide engineering and maintenance support to all three FRC's

homeported in Honolulu.

Some of the team, like Harnay, can occasionally get underway with the ships for training or to support missions if crews are short-handed for some reason. While underway in Hawaii, he was finally able to obtain his U.S. citizenship.

"So, I'm in Hawaii, I have my citizenship, now I want to be a captain," said Harnay. "So, I went to school and got my captain's license, applied for a job here in Honolulu, and I'm now the captain of a dinner cruise yacht."

Harnay was thankful to his command for allowing him to take the part-time position, which he does a few evenings a week when he's off duty.

With a short time left on this enlistment, he has to decide what comes next.

"For me, because I'm from France, being in the Coast Guard is a proud feeling. I have a lot of friends in Europe that never experienced what I get to do every day," said Harnay. "I get to look at it through the eyes of the American military, which in Europe is looked upon with big eyes. It's a very special feeling."

While France is where Harnay is from, Miami has become home to him. If the time comes for him to return home once his Coast Guard service is complete, he can do so without any hesitation. Not only is Miami home, but it also happens to be one of the largest markets for superyachts in the world. With his previous experience working through the ranks as a deck officer, his U.S. citizenship, captain's license, and Coast Guard experience all on his resume, he will likely be in demand to captain any vessel.

"The Coast Guard is very well respected in the industry I came from," said Harnay. "You really stand out anytime they see Coast Guard on your application."

Although not the original reason for joining the Coast Guard, it's definitely become the cherry on top of the whole adventure. From just hoping to figure out how to get back on the yacht as a deck officer to becoming a U.S. citizen and a member of the Coast Guard.

"While my family and I still have time to make the decision, in the end, that's how we will make our choice. Which position is the best option for my family," said Harnay.

Whether he stays or goes, the impact the Coast Guard made on his life will never be forgotten. (USC)

Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc. (Mobil) is a subsidiary of Exxon Mobil Corporation – one of the world's largest publicly traded international oil and gas company, which holds an industry-leading inventory of resources and is one of the world's largest integrated refiners, marketers of petroleum products and chemical manufacturers. This is your opportunity to join this dynamic company and become part of the team that thrives in a fast-paced, controls-oriented environment as:

Aviation Operations Manager

Job Description:

The Aviation Operations Manager is responsible for managing the Aviation Operations and for the safe, proper handling, storage and movement of aviation products at the airport. The Aviation Operations Manager is also responsible for dispensing aviation fuel into aircraft, assists in keeping the facility and personnel in compliance with Mobil's systems, controls, guidelines and standards, and optimizing the efficiency of all assets at the facility.

Location:

- Saipan Aviation Depot, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Job Duties:

- Leads, executes and complies with Mobil's Operations Integrity Management Systems, a company system that manages personnel and process safety by using aviation manuals, controls, standards, policies and guidelines. Adheres to local and federal government regulations and industry standards.
- Ensures that only clean, dry and on-specification fuel is stored and delivered to aircraft safely and efficiently.
- Interfaces with the refuellers and contractors to perform facility or equipment maintenance and repair to improve operations' safety and efficiency in the most economical manner.
- Oversees all aspects of aviation products, assets and materials and ensures that they are used in a safe and efficient manner.
- Responsible for personnel adherence to required levels of performance on assigned duties during the shift. Approves and implements actions on equipment maintenance and repairs recommended by but not limited to, refuellers, contractors and engineering.
- Manages the overall operational expense of the facility including capital expense and project budgeting.
- Reports the current developments and other information pertaining to the operations and performance of the facility to the Upper Pacific Islands Operations Manager.
- Other administrative management duties as required.

Qualifications / Skills required:

- Degree in engineering, and or equivalent experience.
- Management experience in safe petroleum handling, storage and movement or related field
- Understanding of aviation and federal regulations as applicable to petroleum handling, storage and distribution
- Good interpersonal skills, ability to communicate both verbally and in writing

Preference will be given to candidates with relevant experience in aviation operations and with knowledge in petroleum industry.

If you are interested in and/or meet the qualifications for this position, please submit your resume on or before **December 27, 2019** to the following:

Attention to:
Upper Pacific Islands Aviation Operations
Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc.
P.O. Box 500367 CK, Saipan, MP 96950
Fax: 1-670-234-5126
Correspondence Email: maria.kemp@exxonmobil.com

Mobil is an Equal Opportunity Employer

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship status, genetic information, protected veteran or disability status.

Mobil

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SSHS half-day this Friday

Saipan Southern High School will have a half-day session this Friday, Dec. 20, 2019. Students will be dismissed at 12:30pm. Christmas break for SSHS will be from Dec. 23, 2019, to Jan. 3, 2019. Classes will resume on Monday, Jan. 6, 2020. *(PR)*

DMS to release mid-progress reports

Dandan Middle School will distribute the second quarter mid-progress reports to parents and guardians on Thursday, Dec. 19, from 4pm to 6pm. Please proceed to your child's homeroom. In addition, sign up for an appointment with the content teachers if you have questions on your child's progress report.

The school's Parents Teachers Students Association is hosting the Totot Bash on Friday, Jan. 31, 2020, from 5pm to 9pm. Currently, students, teachers, and parents are selling raffle tickets for the annual bash. We are inviting members of the community for a Family Fun Night with games, booths, and food for all to enjoy! *(PR)*

UOG to celebrate ROTC alumni

All alumni of the University of Guam's Reserve Officers Training Corps program, as well as their guests and the public, are invited to an alumni dinner event this Friday in support of the Military Science Department at the university. The event will begin promptly at 7pm in the

UOG Calvo Field House. Attendees are asked to make a donation of \$50 per attendee over the age of 18.

The event aims to connect current ROTC cadets with former cadets who have had fulfilling careers in the U.S. Army in order to inspire pride in the cadets for what their future holds as commissioned officers.

The donation will cover the dinner with the remainder going to the ROTC Military Science Fund within the University of Guam Endowment Foundation to support the enrichment of the ROTC cadet experience. Donations may be made at <https://give.uog.edu/donate/rotc-military-science-fund/>.

Those interested in attending should RSVP by this

Thursday to Tessy Paulino at 735-2543. Attire for the event is island casual or OCPs for current cadets and cadre. *(PR)*

Military to conduct trainings

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Dec. 19, from 10am to 10 am

Training will be conducted within a 12-nautical mile radius of Farallon de Medinilla. For the duration of the exercise the public, fishermen, and marine tour operators are advised to remain clear of this area and monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories.

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 is conducting training at the Dandan training site in Inarajan until Dec. 19, from 11am to 11:55am.

These types of trainings are designed to enhance the readiness of military personnel. Residents in surrounding areas should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity associated with the training. The public should be advised that routine helicopter training often accompanied with the use of blanks can occur during these trainings.

The U.S. Navy will also conduct training today, Dec. 18, from 8am to 8 am in Outer Apra Harbor at coordinates: 13°26'56"N/144°39'56"E.

The public and marine operators are advised to remain alert of military personnel who will be swimming in the water as part of the training event.

These types of trainings are designed to enhance the readiness of military personnel. Residents in surrounding areas

should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity associated with the training.

It is recommended the public, fishermen, and marine tour operators monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories. *(PR)*

Traffic hearings set

All parties with traffic citation(s) scheduled for hearing (arraignment) during the following dates will be held at the stated sites:

■ Thursday, Dec. 19: Marianas Business Plaza, second floor, Courtroom 212B

■ Thursday Dec. 26: Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center

For additional information, contact the Office of the Clerk of Court at telephone number 236-9703, 783-8417, or 783-8522. *(PR)*

Mobil Oil Mariana Islands, Inc. (Mobil) is a subsidiary of Exxon Mobil Corporation – one of the world's largest publicly traded international oil and gas company, which holds an industry-leading inventory of resources and is one of the world's largest integrated refiners, marketers of petroleum products and chemical manufacturers. This is your opportunity to join this dynamic company and become part of the team that thrives in a fast-paced, controls-oriented environment as:

Terminal Operator - Saipan

Job Description:

Performs day to day activities to safely operate a petroleum distribution facility. Maintains Mobil's safety and environmental standards pursuant to local and federal regulations and company's policies, procedures and guidelines. Performs operations of marine tanker receiving, bunkering, tank truck loading, pipeline transfer, product quality testing, handling and storage of bulk and packaged petroleum products while delivering premier product quality and customer service.

Location:

- Saipan Terminal, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Job Duties:

- Executes and complies with company's operational procedures and systems, policies and guidelines by using terminal manuals and procedures, loss prevention tools, and corporate industry standards.
- Conducts routine facility inspections. Maintains housekeeping and conducts maintenance and repairs to ensure safe operating conditions.
- Performs safe marine terminal operations, shore to ship and ship to shore transfers of bulk petroleum products, tank truck loading, pipeline transfers and product quality testing.
- Adheres to safety and environmental programs. Takes a dynamic and proactive approach to protect the environment and the safety, health and security of employees, customers and public.
- Administratively prepares and submits regulatory and internal reports associated with the handling, storage and product movement of the petroleum distribution terminal. Performs oil loss monitoring duties.
- Interfaces with third party contractors, local and federal government agencies, internal and external customers and ExxonMobil's global network system.
- Conducts simple math calculations and conversions of temperature, weights and measures.

Job Requirements:

- Experience in safe petroleum handling, distribution and storage or related field
- At least a high school diploma or equivalent
- Must be familiar with computer applications in spreadsheet, word processing (i.e. MS Word and Excel)
- Understanding of US federal and local regulations as applicable to petroleum handling, storage and distribution
- Willing and able to work shifts based on a 24-hour work day (day and night shifts), willingness to occasionally work extended hours, weekends, and holidays
- Good interpersonal skills, ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing

Preference will be given to candidates with relevant experience in marine terminal operations and with previous experience in petroleum industry

If you are interested in and/or meet the qualifications for this position, please submit your resume on or before December 27, 2019 to the following:

Attention to:
Gabriel F. Pereda, Field Operations Manager-CNMI
P.O. Box 500367 CK, Saipan, MP 96950
Fax: (670) 488-2168
Email: gabe.pereda@exxonmobil.com

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All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship status, genetic information, protected veteran or disability status.



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Terminal Operator - Tinian

Job Description:

Performs day to day activities to safely operate a petroleum distribution facility. Maintains Mobil's safety and environmental standards pursuant to local and federal regulations and company's policies, procedures and guidelines. Performs operations of marine tanker receiving, bunkering, tank truck loading, pipeline transfer, product quality testing, handling and storage of bulk and packaged petroleum products while delivering premier product quality and customer service.

Location:

- Tinian Bulk Plant, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Job Duties:

- Executes and complies with company's operational procedures and systems, policies and guidelines by using terminal manuals and procedures, loss prevention tools, and corporate & industry standards.
- Conducts routine facility inspections. Maintains housekeeping and conducts maintenance and repairs to ensure safe operating conditions.
- Performs safe marine terminal operations, shore to ship and ship to shore transfers of bulk petroleum products, tank truck loading, pipeline transfers and product quality testing.
- Adheres to safety and environmental programs. Takes a dynamic and proactive approach to protect the environment and the safety, health and security of employees, customers and public.
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Afghanistan revelations demand change, war's end

A trove of documents revealing how the public was misled about struggles in Afghanistan should prompt Congress to rescind its blank check for this endless war.

The documents, published recently by The Washington Post, and increased Congressional oversight should also help policymakers make more informed and transparent decisions about how to avoid further catastrophe as the U.S. withdraws.

An inspector general examining the war conducted extensive interviews with diplomats, military leaders and others. The Post obtained these public records through a legal fight that's ongoing. They confirm the public was repeatedly misled by multiple administrations, which touted progress in Afghanistan while flailing without a consistent strategy or objectives.

Many Americans were already disgusted with the human and financial cost of the Middle East wars, which will exceed \$6 trillion. President Donald Trump channeled that angst with campaign promises to withdraw and bring troops home, but now he too is struggling to untangle this knot.

Despite the Post revelations, the House last week passed another military budget that continues to fund the Afghanistan war. An effort to add a sunset clause and require "a clear and specific expression of objectives, targets, and geographic scope" and progress reports was approved earlier by the House but disappointingly didn't make the final version.

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said the revelations are "deeply disturbing" and congressional hearings and oversight are needed. She believes the authorization law should be reworked in 2020, leading to "a strategic withdrawal."

"It just is really alarming to me that Congress was intentionally and really misled by U.S. officials," she said, "so I think it's absolutely imperative that Congress get to the bottom of this—we need to know exactly what happened."

Sadly, the public may be less surprised by the deceit, particularly those paying attention to the lack of progress and clarity in Afghanistan. Nobody thought the U.S. was winning—the question has been whether the benefits of continuing the engagement are justified, said University of Puget Sound Professor Seth Weinberger, who teaches foreign policy and international security.

Among the positive outcomes was the success of a University of Washington program, funded by the State Department, that trained dozens of Afghan law professors. It planted seeds to help the nation grow its judicial system, which is needed to resolve conflicts and overcome endemic corruption. Such civilian efforts could be sustained with a minimal, ongoing military presence, suggests Jon Eddy, the UW law professor emeritus who started the program in 2004.

"There's plenty of middle ground between spending \$100 billion a year without having a strategy and retreating to the borders of the U.S.," he said.

Pentagon leaders suggested as much in a Dec. 11 hear-

See AFGHANISTAN on Next Page



Should we really be shocked that the government lied to us about the Afghan war?

Surprise, surprise, the U.S. government—over the last three presidential administrations—has lied to us about progress in the Afghan war, the longest conflict in American history. According to the Washington Post, which sued the government for the release of candid interviews with more than 400 officials—generals, diplomats, aid workers and Afghan government personnel involved in the war—such officials deliberately lied to the American people about progress in the conflict and hid evidence that the war had become unwinnable. The Post then reported the reaction to its blockbuster story: "Lawmakers, veterans and experts have expressed shock and resignation after a Washington Post report unveiled 18 years of distortion by U.S. officials over the prosecution of the war in Afghanistan." Really? Well, they shouldn't have been.

The old aphorism, "the first casualty of war is truth," has become a cliché because it's almost always true. Even during successful conflicts, government propaganda machines are there to cover up setbacks and foibles. However, when the war isn't going well, those machines kick it up a notch. Remember "Baghdad Bob," Saddam Hussein's public relations guy during the U.S. invasion of Iraq, who kept telling bald-faced lies right up until the Iraqi military was crushed? One might wonder if such blatant dissembling only comes from dictators, but the secret Pentagon Papers, the U.S. government's own history of the Vietnam War that was leaked to the media, indicated that democracies also tell whoppers to avoid telling their citizens hard wartime truths. The Post's reporting on Afghan war lies by officialdom is already being compared to those monumental papers.

One can forgive the public a bit for being shocked when the Pentagon Papers were released, because it had been more than 60 years since the military had fought a counterinsurgency (COIN) war against guerrillas in the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century. During that war, congressional hearings had exposed U.S. government torture and other atrocities during a very tough fight against Filipino insurgents. In this instance, the COIN war in Afghanistan started less than 30 years after the Vietnam War ended. So many in the public should have been wary of the Afghan war when it morphed from attrition of al-Qaida and their Taliban hosts after the 9/11 attacks into a COIN war, which usually becomes a long, drawn-out effort to build or rebuild a nation.

In Vietnam and Afghanistan and Iraq after the initial invasions, the United States tried nation build by backing illegitimate and corrupt client governments. Unlike conventional wars between large armies in uniform in which the U.S. military has proven

By **IVAN ELAND**
Tribune News Service

Ivan Eland is author of *War and the Rogue Presidency* and senior fellow at the Independent Institute.



itself very adept, COIN warfare against much poorer, rag-tag guerrillas, which don't wear uniforms, use hit-and-run tactics, and then blend back into the local population has been much more problematic. Guerrilla warfare is the most successful form of warfare in human history and gives the poor a good chance to beat the rich. The strategy most likely to give some chance of winning against such guerrillas is 85% political (backing a legitimate and clean government), 10% administrative (providing the population with basic services to win its "hearts and minds"), and only 5% military. Yet most of the effort and attention in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq centered around the military aspects of the war.

However, militaries are not organizations that are very good at governing or nation building. For example, U.S. military units in Afghanistan were initially tasked with local governance and training the Afghan security forces. Because U.S. forces are highly effective on the battlefield, American commanders are tempted to let them fight rather than train local forces. However, despite local forces being much less capable in combat, in the long term they may be more effective because as locals, they can gather more intelligence on who the guerrillas are and have a better chance of performing the non-military cultural tasks of COIN warfare (95% of the effort). Also, the American public might have wondered why the brutal Taliban were able to win any "hearts and minds" of the all-important local populace; the answer is because the U.S. military, although benevolent by comparison, is often hated as a foreign invader, whereas the Taliban are at least Afghan.

And the U.S. military is not alone fighting uphill in COIN wars. Despite the British Empire failing three times in Afghanistan in the late 1800s and early 1900s and the ruthless Soviet Union failing there as recently as the 1980s, arrogant U.S. government officials unbelievably failed to grasp how difficult it would be to win in a country called "the graveyard of empires."

See SHOULD on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Noche buena

Haf signifikasion ha'anen Noche Buena? I mafañagun I Niño Jesus as nanaña Santa Maria ni inakompañia as tataña San Jose.

Estague' i sentrun selebrasion ma'lag na pueñge 'nai mafañagu i Nanalibreta! Man-ina un' ma'lag pution gi hilu' liyañg bilen kumu luseru ni fuimatta gi enteru elmundu i finatton I Sainata.

Segun i estoria, memegaiña gi umaligau i lahen Yuus guihe na pueñge mamopble. Mapokate chagu' lugat para umali'e i Niño! I liyañg 'nai mafañagu gaige esta pa'gu na tiempu.

Huñgan, animu na preparasion para ha'anen Noche Buena, kompliañus i Niño Jesus, tradision relihion mañgatoliku siha guine na atkipetlagu.

Mientras tantus, hu e'ekuñgug "Puengen Yuus", un' bonitun kanta ni muna' oppan i mafañagun i Niño Jesus. I finattoña tutu-hun dignu na pinetsige yan satbasion para i tautau siha!

Guaha 'nai hufaisen maisayu' haf para ta susede 'an ti mattu i Saina mage gi tanu'? Siempre man-mama' bote hit gi halum man-dañkulu napu gi taduñg tasi ni uttimofña mañogñug. Mali-ñgu i digno-ta kumu tautau.

Agradesimientu pot disposision Yuus Tata ni muna' fattu uni-ku lahiña pot satbasionta. Mit gracias gi Saina!

Ayudu

I sensian natibu motmut ina'ayuda yan gineftau mina' likidu tautau-ta gi kinalamten unu yan todú. Metgut i sensian yine'ase' gi korasonta piot para i man-namase'.

Desde antigu na tiempu, tautau isla geftau gi tautauña, gineftau ni sumede adelantu gi kinalamten natibu. Ga'oghu umayuda haye na prohimu ya u klaru konsensiag-hu ke bai upus pot estauña. Sensian kilisyanu!

Finu' man-amku' "I tanu' ridondu". Haf kumilulog huyuñg gi agapa' siempre u fattu tatte. 'Nai ha birague' hagu gaige! Kumeke ilegña na pasensia hau gi prohimu-mu sa' parehu hamyu tautau. Felis Noche Buena para hagu yan familiamu!

Futtuna

Guaha 'nai hu atan mona haf' futtuna-ta 20-50 años yan pa'gu. Lau gaige i asuntu gi haye kabisiyu gi hechuran planu. Gi pa'gu mauleg kinalamten komunidan bisnis.

Lau haf' ya maribaha 'nai gigigu yan poduñg fondu gi kaha? Estague' na puntu muna' presisu preparasion planu. Debi u guaha otru maneran satbasion para 'an siakassu na lotgun i presente.

Tinilaika

I finattun "hi-tech" pot usun computer (komputa) yan otru siha trastes tumulaika mondun cho'chu' siha guine. Dañkulu lokue' na tinilaika ha pega gi ha'anen famaguon yan hita mismu.

I Internet kabales na infotmasion guaha desde gaseta yan otru siha asuntu ni libianu un' taitai. Kontodu mafanana'an "email" (katta) ni siña unna' setbe yan famaguon-mu gi un' sigidu. Siña lokue' in' pega litratun miyu mientras sige i konbetsasion.

AFGHANISTAN

From Page 10

ing before the House Armed Services Committee. One option they're considering is withdrawing most of the 13,000 troops from Afghanistan and leaving a smaller number to continue counterterrorism efforts.

Whatever course is taken should be done in consultation with Congress, as called for by a majority of senators—including Murray—in January. That was in response to Trump's abrupt plan to withdraw troops from Syria in December.

A similarly sudden withdrawal from Afghanistan would have terrible consequences.

"As you come out, the place will implode; there will be millions of refugees flowing into the adjoining countries," said retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey of Seattle, adding that women will go back into slavery, trappings of modernity will disappear and "it will go back to unending tribal warfare."

Still, the war must end. But it must end in a deliberate, transparent manner, not frenetically to provide campaign fodder.

With Congress and the press shining more light on the Afghanistan debacle, there's an opportunity for a more informed and collaborative approach to the war's end. This is also an opportunity for presidential candidates to explain how they'd solve this conundrum and better advance U.S. interests in the region.

(c)2019 The Seattle Times

Dos gasetan nasionat hu rikononose kada oga'an: Washington Times and Japan Times. Kabales na gaseta ginen enteru elmundu gaige gi todú dos.

Dispues 'nai hu ayeg asuntu para bai analisa 'sino estudiaye para materiat taimanu i gaige guine na pahina. Diariu na eksisiu pot mas ke 46 años i manaitai yan mañge'. Mauleg na eksisiu gi usun kabesa 'sino mantaftaf hit manhafat-ta gi inamko'ta.

Lemai

Malofanyu' gi hagas soñgsuñg para bai li'e haf' na tinilaika guaha desde ke indinñgu. Dididi' matulaika i lugat lau gagaige ha' i dos troñkun lemai ni sumetbe manadan familia antes.

Esta hana' mahalañgu' pot sessu in' bisita 'an mantai 'agun ham hinegsa' guihe na tiempu. Entre masotne 'sino saibog para usun i tropa. Piot ya lasneg ñaihon, paire 'an masaibog yan niyog. Adahe 'an mañalañg ham. Kontodu i gai lemai in' lalaladde!

Mauleg na 'agun ya dimas de tapan matman kase dinanche 'an tatanume todú lugat lemai. Paire na katsun 'agun familia gi tiempun ha' ilas! Chage tumanume tatten guma' para usun familia dispues.

Finagpu'

Gi finagpu' misan gayu man-na'lagu ham kafe ya in' usune yan choda sino sune. Amotsan Champion! Ayu ha' guinahan mame gi finattun Noche Buena! Lau ni unu sumeha umaksepta haf' guaha gi lamasan senan familia.

Kase 'las tres gi talo'ane 'nai mafattu i Niño giya hame. Namagof i motmut na felisitasion Noche Buena ginen grupun i

Your Medicare costs in 2020

As we head into the new year, I wanted to let you know how much your Medicare premiums, deductibles, and other out-of-pocket costs will be in 2020.

Each year, Medicare premiums, deductibles, and copayment rates are adjusted according to the Social Security Act. For 2020, the Medicare Part B monthly premiums and the annual deductible are higher than the 2019 amounts.

The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$144.60 for 2020, an increase of \$9.10. The Part B premium in 2019 was \$135.50.

The standard premium is what most people with Medicare pay. Part B covers physician services, outpatient hospital services, certain home health services, durable medical equipment, and certain other medical and health services not covered by Medicare Part A.

The annual deductible for all Part B beneficiaries is \$198 in 2020, an increase of \$13 from the annual deductible of \$185 in 2019.

The increase in the Part B premiums and deductible is largely due to Medicare's rising expenses for drugs administered in doctors' offices. Current law requires Medicare to pay the average sales price for a Part B drug and also pays physicians a percentage of a drug's sale price.

This incentivizes drug companies to set prices higher and for physicians to prescribe more expensive drugs, since that leads to a higher Medicare payment. The Trump Administration is working to lower prices for Part B drugs through its drug pricing blueprint.

Since 2007, Part B premiums have been based in part on a beneficiary's income, with higher-income beneficiaries paying higher premiums. These income-related monthly adjustment amounts affect about 7 percent of people with Part B. The 2020 Part B total premiums for high-income beneficiaries can be found here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2020-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles>

Medicare Part A covers inpatient hospital, skilled nursing,

SHOULD

From Page 10

(The United States also ignored British problems subduing Iraq in the 20th century.) Even worse, in Afghanistan, the United States learned nothing from the same situation in Vietnam; in its history the Vietnamese had fought foreign occupiers from China and more recently from France and Japan before kicking out the United States. In all these conflicts, locals just hit and run and wait for the foreign interloper to get tired and go home. In Afghanistan, the U.S. government hasn't even been smart enough to do that.

In COIN wars, if the foreign power or client government it

By **JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.



Niño! Tai malefaghu ni kantan Niño ginen i chagu ni sige guatu giya hame. Fitme yan ma'ug na felisitasion para unu yan todú!

Nino

Desde ke estaba gi tiyan nanaña, machanda. In' hassu 'nai ni unu muna' halum si Santa Maria gi gima' niha? Dispues tinatiye 'nai makotte as Ponsiu Pilatu, masentensia sin umisau, makastiga yan mapunu' gi kilu'us?

Sumen natriste ayu na patte gi ha'aniña i Sainata. Lau para todú mattiru ni unabes 'nai sumeha. I finataiña yan lumala'ña sumatba futtunan i tautau siha gi enteru elmundu. Tai achaigua na sakrifisiun mattit! Haf' mohon futtuna-ta sin sakrifisioña?

Ginen tai achaigua na sakrifisioña sumustene dignun tautau—kada unu giya hita—pot mantai nina' siña hit kontra tinailayen paganu na atoridat.

By **CATE KORTZEBORN**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Cate Kortzeborn is Medicare's regional administrator for Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Territories. You can always get answers to your Medicare questions by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).



and some home health care services. About 99 percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have a Part A premium since they paid Medicare payroll taxes for at least 40 quarters of employment.

The Part A inpatient hospital deductible that beneficiaries will pay when admitted to the hospital will be \$1,408 in 2020, an increase of \$44 from \$1,364 in 2019. The Part A inpatient hospital deductible covers beneficiaries' share of costs for the first 60 days of Medicare-covered inpatient hospital care in a benefit period.

In 2020, beneficiaries must pay a coinsurance amount of \$352 per day for the 61st through 90th day of a hospitalization (versus \$341 in 2019) in a benefit period and \$704 per day for lifetime reserve days (versus \$682 in 2019).






For beneficiaries in skilled nursing facilities, the daily coinsurance for days 21 through 100 of extended care services in a benefit period will be \$176 in 2020 (\$170.50 in 2019).

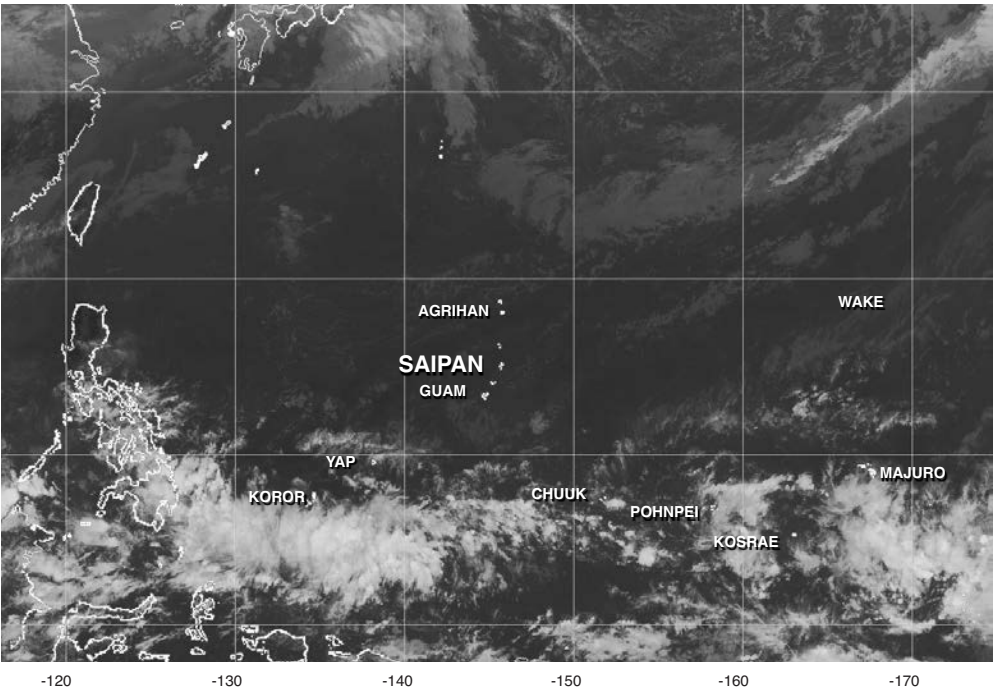
These premiums and cost sharing apply to people with Original or Traditional Medicare. Premiums and deductibles for Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D Prescription Drug plans were previously finalized.

On average for 2020, Medicare Advantage premiums are expected to decline by 23 percent from 2018, and will be the lowest in the past 13 years while plan choices, benefits, and enrollment continue to increase.

backs is not winning, it is losing. Recently, the U.S. generals have told us the Afghan war is stalemated, which is another lie; in fact, the war was lost many years ago. The real lesson learned in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq is that COIN wars are long, brutal and tough for foreign invaders to win. Even if you win, what have you won? Most of these wars are fought in developing countries where nation building is not that strategically important for U.S. security. Lawmakers, "experts" and veterans of these wars should not have been ignorant of these facts and the American public should hold them accountable for any lies they told. More importantly, the public should become more informed about past military debacles and raise its voice to stay out of future likely quagmires.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.		Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.		Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.		Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	
86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	75°	86°	75°	86°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:23 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2019
WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC BETWEEN EQUATOR AND 25N FROM 130E TO 180.

Fresh to strong trades will last through the week. A shallow moist layer capped by extremely dry air aloft will allow no more than isolated showers delivering only small quantities of rainfall through the week. Fresh to strong trade winds and seas up to 10 feet will keep the Small Craft Advisory in effect all week. The high risk of rip currents will also continue through the week along east facing reefs, possibly spreading around to north facing beaches such as Guam's Ritidian Beach at times.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an up-dated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA ▼ ▲ °F		
Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 80°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE ▼ ▲ °F		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	70° / 59°
Beijing	Sunny	37° / 14°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	72° / 61°
Honolulu	Showers	86° / 73°
London	Partly Cloudy	46° / 43°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	78° / 58°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	81° / 57°
Miami	Thunderstorms	77° / 63°
New York	Mostly Sunny	40° / 19°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	55° / 46°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	52° / 48°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	48° / 34°
Rome	Showers	63° / 50°
Salem	Sunny	50° / 30°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	54° / 46°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 25°
Tokyo	Cloudy	48° / 43°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	42° / 23°



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
5:58 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.29
1:19 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.78
7:28 PM	LOW TIDE	0.92
11:48 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.36

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Sunday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	11:40 AM	11:43 PM
Thursday	-	-	12:25 PM
Friday	-	12:40 AM	1:08 PM
Saturday	-	1:36 AM	1:52 PM
Sunday	-	2:32 AM	2:36 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6	UA104	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily	SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
				SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	Daily	OZ6233	8:00am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6
OZ626	2:10am	6:05am	1	OZ623	8:55am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:25am	3, 7	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 4, 5, 6	TW309	11:10am	4:25pm	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily	OZ625	7:30pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ6243	3:20pm	7:10pm	2, 4, 6	TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	Daily
OZ624	3:50pm	7:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
TW310	5:25pm	10:15pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	4, 7	3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)				HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	12:05pm	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	8:50pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:00am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:50pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN	UA184/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR	OZ704/6233	11:45pm	1:20pm+1	1, 3, 5 via ICN
				OZ704/623	11:45pm	2:30pm+1	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/6233	12:35am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ746/623	12:35am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:40am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ6243/9661	3:20pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ624/9661	3:50pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
				UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
				1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
				1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
				1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
				1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
				2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
				2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
				2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
				2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily				

Domenech joins Operation Christmas Drop

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—Doug Domenech, the U.S. Department of the Interior assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs, ended official business in Guam and in the CNMI by participating in the U.S. Department of the Air Force's 68th annual Operation Christmas

Drop last Dec. 9.

Domenech joined Federated States of Micronesia president David Panuelo, U.S. Ambassador to the FSM Robert Riley, and other officials in Guam for the Operation Christmas Drop 2019 Push Ceremony at Andersen Air Force Base after taking

a ride with a small team of U.S. airmen on a U.S. Air Force C-130 plane to drop essentials and toys for families on Lukunor in Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia.

"It was an honor and thrill to participate in this exciting operation that the U.S. De-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Photo shows, from left, U.S. Ambassador Robert Riley, Federated States of Micronesia president David Panuelo, and U.S. Department of the Interior assistant secretary Douglas W. Domenech at the Andersen Air Force Base on Guam

partment of Defense has been operating in the Pacific for 68 years," said Domenech. "This event is a testament to the long and enduring relationships that the U.S. has in the Pacific, and I was glad to help spread holiday cheer to some of the most remote insular areas."

Operation Christmas Drop is the Department of Defense's longest-running humanitarian airlift operation that has since become a Christmas tradition since 1952 when a B-29 Superfortress aircrew saw islanders waving at them from the island of Kapingamarangi, located in the Federated

States of Micronesia, 3,500 miles southwest of Hawaii. In the spirit of Christmas, the aircrew dropped a bundle of supplies attached to a parachute to the islanders below, giving the operation its name. Today, air drop operations include more than 50 islands throughout the Pacific providing 75,000

lbs of fishing gear, toys, and other essentials to more than 39,000 people across the smaller, remote islands in the larger Micronesia region.

Watch the DOI video on Twitter about Operation ChristmasDrop2019 at: <https://twitter.com/Interior/status/1204491757125328897>. (PR)

ON THE NET

<https://twitter.com/Interior/status/1204491757125328897>.



FIGHTING HOMELESSNESS

MARK RABAGO

CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition chair Christy Sakaziro, third from left, presides over the non-profit's meeting last Friday at the Division of Youth Services office in Chalan Piao. The CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition is preparing for its 2020 Point-In-Time survey on Jan. 25, 2020, from 7am to 4pm and the coalition is looking for between 100 to 150 volunteers to count the number of homeless households or those living in substandard homes in the CNMI. At its last survey, 500 households took part in the census. The total number of homeless people in the CNMI was 1,018, while people living in substandard homes totaled 769.

UOG to hold commencement rites on Dec. 22



Muna

More than 240 graduates are expected to receive their degrees on Sunday, Dec. 22, at the University of Guam's fall commencement ceremony, starting at 2pm in the Calvo Field House.

Annmarie T. Muña, a licensed independent insurance broker and general manager for AM Insurance, will deliver the commencement address. Muña graduated with top honors from the University of Guam in 1983, earning her bachelor's as a double major in management and business administration while working as an insurance clerk. Following graduation, she transitioned into management and in 1994 opened her own insurance company, AM Insurance, in response to a growing need on island for excess and surplus coverage of large local companies.

"Annmarie's success story is one that many UOG stu-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

File photo shows the master's degree graduates of the University of Guam as they prepare to walk across the stage and receive their degrees at the Fañomñakan 2019 commencement ceremony in May.

dents can relate and aspire to," said UOG president Thomas W. Krise. "She had dreams of

big things, and her education here at UOG prepared her to achieve her goals. Now she is

one of the island's most successful professionals in her field."

The commencement ceremony for the fall semester, officially called the Fanuchānan

term, will be streamed live on the University of Guam's Facebook page. (UOG)

Business

JZ Group mantra: To invest and educate in real estate

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

When Jiang Zheng Group Inc. president Eric Guo first came to Saipan in 2013 for a reunion trip with his school buddies, he fell in love with the place and saw potential in putting up a business. Two years later, Jiang Zheng Group Inc. was established on Saipan and it is Guo's first investment outside of China.

Guo, a successful realtor in Shanghai, has been in the business for 14 years. He manages 50 offices and 200 employees in China. "On Saipan, we are currently focused on selling land. Initially, we sold houses, apartments, and land. We real-

ized the business and marketing of selling land and houses are different," he said.

"We shifted our focus to just land because most of our clients want to buy land and they do the improvement. We guide them through out the sale and as after sale service, our professional team help them acquire permits and the whole process makes the clients happy," he added.

Guo said that in China, people cannot own land as land is considered public land. "At most that they can do is own an apartment or house for a maximum of 70 years... when the 70 years expire, they pay little bit of money to extend."



BEA CABRERA
"Our company has been making contribution for the betterment of the community and we are happy to do that," said JZ Group Inc. president Eric Guo

"That's why the land here is very attractive for the Chinese market because this island is

very beautiful and very close to mainland China. It also imbibes the American way of life, culture, education, and hospital care," he added.

According to JZ Group general counsel Jordan Sundell, the company covers two transactions. "...what sets us apart from other realtors is we find land here and then market and sell it to clients in China... we also cater to other markets or clients that come to us for realty needs.... all the other brokers can find land but they cannot sell it," he said.

"Our strength is we invest a lot to be able to successfully sell property in China. That's our biggest advantage overall," he said.

Guo uprooted his family from China because he is not only building a business, he also wants to build a life here. "I like this island very much and my family is here. Personally, I want to see the island to be more beautiful

and help improve this island from my heart so I try my best to connect with the local people," he said.

"Our company has been making contribution for the betterment of the community and we are happy to do that," he added.

In September, Marianas Young Professionals, a non-profit organization that helps promote young professionals in the CNMI, recognized the initiatives of JZ Group by giving them a plaque of appreciation for investing in the skills and talents of public school high school students.

JZ Group sponsored an educational initiative called "Open Reef Innovations" where many students participated to learn about virtual and augmented reality technologies.

"Also part of giving back to the community is we started doing regular seminars where we share information that is designed toward the local market. We help them understand real estate, transactions, probate, and estate planning... we want them to make smarter decisions and have a better idea of what is going on," Sundell said.

"It is intended to be educational, there are no sales pitch as we are not trying to do business, and everyone is welcome to come listen hear and learn. The first one we held in our office in Garapan and the second one was held at the public library in Susupe. We plan to organize more seminars like this in the coming months," he added.

Guo said that JZ Group will be here for the long term. "We have some projects that are pending...although tourist arrivals have been slow especially after Super Typhoon Yutu, I know this is how business goes. It changes and you have to be ready to ride with the changes. I take it as wintertime but come Autumn, we will reap the fruits of hard work."

"...I want to continue to contribute to the island... my vision is to help make it nicer like Guam and Hawaii... if that happens 20-30 years from now, I can happily say that I was involved in that," he added.

JZ Group's office is located in Garapan. They are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 9pm. For more information, call (670) 233-1010.



JZ Group Inc. general counsel Jordan Sundell and JZ Group Inc. president Eric Guo, center, receive a plaque of appreciation from Marianas Young Professionals for sponsoring an educational initiative called "Open Reef Innovations" where many students participated to learn about virtual and augmented reality technologies in September this year.

Jack in the Box Guam announces winner of DeForest Buckner Sweepstakes

GUAM—Jack in the Box awarded the grand prize of their DeForest Buckner Sweepstakes to Kaimana Terlaje, a local resident of Guam. Terlaje won a trip for two to San Francisco to meet NFL Pro Bowler, DeForest Buckner, and watch the 49ers take on the Falcons at Levi Stadium on Dec. 15. To enter the sweepstakes, Guam residents visited Jack in the Box to take their picture with the DeForest Buckner display and posted their picture on social media.

Jack in the Box Inc. (NASDAQ: JACK), based in San

Diego, California, is a restaurant company that operates and franchises Jack in the Box restaurants, one of the nation's largest hamburger chains, with more than 2,200 restaurants in 21 states and Guam. For more information on Jack in the Box, including franchising opportunities, visit www.jackinthebox.com. (PR)

Jack in the Box Guam employees, Julz Coronel and Jenny Tinoso, congratulate Kaimana Terlaje for winning the DeForest Buckner Sweepstakes.



Boeing to halt production of 737 Max airliner in January

Boeing Co. said Monday that it will temporarily stop producing its grounded 737 Max jet starting in January as it struggles to get approval from regulators to put the plane back in the air.

The Chicago-based company said production would halt at its plant with 12,000 employees in Renton, Washington, near Seattle. But it said it didn't expect to lay off any workers "at this time."

The move amounts to an acknowledgement that it will take much longer than Boeing expected to win approval from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and other global regulators to fly the planes again.

The Max is Boeing's most important jet, but it has been grounded since March after crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed a total of

346 people. The FAA told the company last week that it had unrealistic expectations for getting the plane back into service. Boeing has missed several estimates of a return date for the plane, and the company didn't give a date on Monday.

Even if no employees are laid off, ceasing production still will cut into the nation's economic output because of Boeing's huge footprint in the nation's manufacturing sector. Through October of this year, the U.S. aerospace industry's factory output has fallen 17% compared with the same period last year, to \$106.4 billion, in part due to previous 737 Max production cuts.

The shutdown also is likely to ripple through Boeing's vast network of 900 companies that make engines, bodies and other parts for the 737, and layoffs are likely. (AP)

STOCK
PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

S&P
3,191.45
+22.65
+0.71%

DOW
28,235.89
+100.51
+0.36%

NASDAQ
8,814.23
+79.35
+0.91%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms	
Australian Dollar	1.46
British Pound	0.75
Canadian Dollar	1.32
Chinese Yuan	6.88
Euro	0.90
Hong Kong Dollar	7.79
Indian Rupee	70.27
Japanese Yen	109.53
Malaysian Ringgit	4.10
New Zealand Dollar	1.52
Philippine Peso	49.63
Russian Ruble	62.57
Singapore Dollar	1.35
South Korean Won	1,143.82
Swiss Franc	0.98
Taiwan Dollar	29.62
Thailand Baht	30.21

Nation

Democrats say impeachment case shows Trump deserves ouster

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Democrats laid out their impeachment case against President Donald Trump, a sweeping report accusing him

of betraying the nation and deserving to be ousted, as key lawmakers began to signal where they stand ahead of this week's landmark votes.

What Democrats once hoped would be a bipartisan act — only the third time in U.S. history the House will be voting to impeach a president — was on track to a starkly partisan roll call Wednesday. No Republicans were breaking with the president, and almost all Democrats were expected to approve the charges against him.

The House Rules Committee was to meet Tuesday in what was expected to be a marathon session to set the parameters for Wednesday's debate.

A raucous town hall Monday in the Detroit suburbs put on display the nation's wrenching debate over the unconventional president and

the prospect of removing him from office. Freshman Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin was both heckled and celebrated as she announced her support for impeachment.

"There's certainly a lot of controversy about this," Slotkin acknowledged to the crowd of 400. "But there just has to be a moment where you use the letter of the law for what it's intended."

Trump faces two articles of impeachment brought by Democrats. They say he abused the power of his office by pressuring Ukraine to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden ahead of the 2020 election and obstructed Congress by aggressively trying to

block the House investigation from its oversight duties as part of the nation's system of checks and balances.

The president "betrayed the Nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections," says the 650-page report from the House Judiciary Committee. He withheld military aid from the ally as leverage, the report says, and "Trump, by such conduct, has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office."

The report says the president then engaged in an unprecedented attempt to block the investigation and "cover

up" his misconduct. "In the history of the Republic, no President has ever ordered the complete defiance of an impeachment inquiry," it says.

Trump, tweeting from the sidelines after instructing the White House not to participate in the House inquiry, insisted he has done nothing wrong. He has promoted lawyer Rudy Giuliani's investigation of Biden and a widely debunked theory that it was actually Ukraine not Russia that interfered in the 2016 election, a conspiracy-laden idea that other most other Republicans have actively avoided. "He knows what he's doing," Trump said of Giuliani at the White House.

ACROSS THE NATION

Indiana shooting leaves 4-year-old dead, pregnant mom hurt

GARY, Ind. (AP)—A shooting in northwestern Indiana has killed a 4-year-old Gary boy and left his pregnant mother hospitalized with gunshot wounds, police said. Gary police responding to reports of a shooting at a residence about 1 a.m. Monday found the wounded boy, who was pronounced dead at a hospital. Gary Cmdr. Jack Hamady said in a news release that "at this time, it appears someone from outside the residence fired several shots into the residence." The child's 27-year-old mother was hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries after being shot in the arm and suffering a graze wound to her face. Hamady said three other children were in the house at the time of the shooting, which is under investigation. The Lake County Coroner's office identified the boy who died as Tory'on Dukes and said he was shot in the upper body while in bed. His death has been ruled a homicide. Police urged the public to share information about what might have led to the shooting in Gary, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) southeast of Chicago. Tory'on's family "should be celebrating Christmas. It's pretty heartbreaking to see, especially if you have children of your own," said Edward Gonzales of the Metro Crimes task force.

Fake social accounts bring down police chief—and successor

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP)—Hours after the police chief in Vermont's largest city resigned over using a fake social media account to heckle a critic, the mayor announced that the officer acting as chief revealed she too has used a fake account. Deputy Chief Jan Wright told Burlington's mayor Monday that she used a fake Facebook account to engage citizens in police policy talk. Mayor Miro Weinberger said that while Wright's fake account was different than former Burlington Police Department Chief Brandon

del Pozo's, it highlights a widespread problem of leadership being caught in the web of social media. "Given the circumstances the department is facing, I found the failure to raise this issue with me in the lead-up to today to constitute a lapse in judgment," Weinberger said in a statement. As a result, Weinberger named Deputy Chief Jon Murad the new acting chief and said Murad has "confirmed explicitly" to the city attorney that he has never used a fake social media account. Wright was named interim chief of the department earlier Monday after del Pozo submitted his resignation over backlash from using a fake Twitter account. He's accused of using the anonymous account to respond to a critic for one hour on July 4 before deleting the account.

FBI: 19-year-old arrested, charged in Houston mercury spills

HOUSTON (AP)—A 19-year-old man was arrested Monday after mercury was found spilled in Houston parking lots, leading dozens of people to be decontaminated as a precaution, authorities said. The FBI's Houston office said Christopher Lee Melder had been charged with burglary and unlawful disposal of hazardous material. The FBI said he allegedly broke into a lab and stole the toxic metal. The FBI didn't release the lab's name or location. Melder was also charged on an outstanding felony drug possession warrant. It wasn't immediately known whether he had a lawyer and authorities didn't immediately say if the spills were intentional. On Sunday, less than a pint of mercury was found spilled in the parking lots outside three businesses located near one another: a Walmart, a Sonic Drive-In and a Shell gas station. The Houston Health Department said Monday evening that additional testing detected mercury inside the Walmart, including at a McDonald's inside the store. The department also said Monday evening that possible contamination was being investigated at a nearby convenience store called Bucky's.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky., walks to the Senate Chamber, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington. AP

3 dead as suspected twisters, other storms batter the South

Three people are confirmed dead and several others have been injured as powerful storms smashed into buildings, downed trees and left a trail of destruction around the Deep South on Monday.

One person was killed in a suspected tornado strike on a Louisiana home, and two others were confirmed dead after another storm hit around a community about 55 miles (90 kilometers) west of the north Alabama city of Huntsville.

Two people were killed and at least four others were injured when another apparent tornado smashed into Town Creek, Alabama, the community's police chief, Jerry Garrett, told a news conference late Monday. Officials there said houses or mobiles were destroyed.

Details remained sketchy

on the extent of damages as darkness and downed trees and lines hampered the work of first responders.

The storms triggered multiple tornado watches and warnings over a span of several hours Monday. Elsewhere, some cities opened shelters as a cold front collided with warmer air over northern Gulf Coast states and temperatures were expected to plunge. The National Weather Service said the severe weather threat could last into the early hours Tuesday.

The Louisiana death Monday was attributed to an apparent tornado that struck a residential area in Vernon Parish, but details were not immediately available, said Chief Deputy Calvin Turner. He said authorities feared others could be hurt in the area

since crews were still trying to reach hard-hit areas where downed trees and power lines blocked roads.

"We've got damage at lots of places. We've got a church where the fellowship hall is torn all to pieces. Some homes are hit. Right now we're having trouble just getting to places because of trees that are down," Turner said.

In nearby Alexandria, Louisiana, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) northwest of New Orleans, the storm left roads impassable and destroyed a car lot, said Capt. Phillip Jordan of the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office.

Children in a church school were moved to the church before the tornado ripped off the school's roof, said Cpl. Wade Bourgeois, spokesman for the Alexandria Police Department.

Among the hardest-hit spots was the Johnny Downs Sports Complex, which he said may have suffered "total damage."

"Fortunately we have no reports of any deaths or serious injuries," he said of the Alexandria area.

Bourgeois said some mobile homes and a few houses were damaged. Downed power lines left people stuck in homes or other buildings until rescuers could reach them, Bourgeois said.

"They weren't pinned or dangerously trapped," he said.

Meteorologist Donald Jones of the National Weather Service office in Lake Charles said it appeared the twister that hit part of Alexandria also struck near the town of Deridder on an "absolutely ridiculous" path estimated at 63 miles (101 kilometers) long.

Asia

New Zealand IDs 2 bodies not found after volcano eruption

PERTH, Australia (AP)—Police said Tuesday that an Australian teenager and a New Zealand tour guide are the two people presumed dead but whose bodies have not been found after last week's volcanic eruption on New Zealand's White Island that killed 18 people.

New Zealand police said the bodies of Winona Langford, 17, of Sydney and New Zealander Hayden Marshall-Inman, 40, have yet to be accounted for.

Authorities believe both bodies are in the waters around White Island, but harsh conditions Tuesday forced an abandonment of the search for the second straight day.

Inclement weather struck the Bay of Plenty, where White Island is located, and a water-based search has been ruled out due to the forecast of storms.

Langford's parents, Anthony and Kristine Langford, died in the eruption, while her brother, Jesse Langford, survived with severe burns and is being treated in a Sydney hospital.

In a previously released statement from the Langford family, Anthony and Kristine Langford were described as "loving parents."

"They will be greatly missed by all who knew them," the statement said.

New Zealand police on Tuesday released the names of three more people who died in the eruption: Australians Richard Elzer, 32, and Julie Richards, 47, and Sydney-



AP
New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern observes a moment of silence with her cabinet colleagues at the moment that a volcano erupted a week earlier, killing 18 people and leaving others with severe burns, in Wellington, New Zealand, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

an emotional Payne told reporters on Tuesday. "Here in places like Auckland, in Sydney, we're surrounded by Christmas and celebration, but they face tragedy and devastation."

"Our hearts and thoughts

are with them every step of the way," she added.

Military specialists recovered six bodies last Friday from White Island, which remains at risk of erupting again.

Scientists have warned that White Island, which is the exposed tip of a mostly undersea volcano, is highly volatile, and has been venting steam and mud regularly.

Survivors are being treated in hospitals across New Zealand and Australia.

Specialist medical teams from Australia, Britain and the United States have assisted in New Zealand.

China, Russia urge UN to lift key N. Korea sanctions

United Nations (AP)—China and Russia are calling on the U.N. Security Council to terminate sanctions on key North Korean exports such as coal, iron, iron ore and textiles, "with the intent of enhancing the livelihood of the civilian population."

A draft resolution circulated to council members Monday by the two allies of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un would also lift a ban on North Koreans working overseas and terminate a decision to repatriate all those earning income abroad by Dec. 22.

The council expressed concern when the repatriation provision was adopted two years ago that earnings from the nearly 100,000 overseas North Koreans, according to a U.S. estimate, are being used to support the North's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

China and Russia made these and other proposals 16 days before Kim's end-of-December deadline for the United States to come up with new proposals to revive nuclear diplomacy.

At Kim's second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump last February, negotiations faltered after the U.S. rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities.

North Korea has carried out 13 ballistic missile launches since May seeking to pressure Washington, and it has hinted at lifting its moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests if the Trump administration fails to make substantial concessions before the new year.

The proposed resolution,

obtained by The Associated Press, welcomes the continuing dialogue between the United States and North Korea and calls on all parties to consider implementing "further practical steps to reduce military tension on the Korean peninsula and probability of any military confrontation by all appropriate means." Its suggestions include adoption of a formal declaration and/or peace treaty ending the 1950-53 Korean War.

The draft resolution also calls for "prompt resumption of the six-party talks or re-launch of multilateral consultations in any other similar format, with the goal of facilitating a peaceful and comprehensive solution through dialogue."

The six-party talks involving North Korea, South Korea, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan began in 2003 and led Pyongyang to accept a deal in September 2005 to end its nuclear weapons program in exchange for security, economic and energy benefits. But after difficult negotiations, North Korea refused to accept U.S.-proposed verification methods, and the agreement fell through in December 2008. The six-party talks have been stalled since then.

The China-Russia draft resolution reiterates "that all parties should commit to work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula." It would call on the nuclear weapon states — the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France — that are parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to work with North Korea on "the process of practical denuclearization of the Korean peninsula."

Across India, opposition building against citizenship law

NEW DELHI (AP)—Thousands of university students flooded the streets of India's capital, while a southern state government led a march and demonstrators held a silent protest in the northeast on Monday against a new law giving citizenship to non-Muslims who entered India illegally to flee religious persecution in neighboring countries.

The protests in New Delhi followed a night of violent clashes between police and demonstrators at Jamia Millia Islamia University. People who student organizers said were not students set three buses on fire and police stormed the university library, firing tear gas at students crouched under desks.

Members of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party said opposition parties were using the students as pawns.

based U.S. citizen Barbara Hollander, 49.

Of the 47 people on White Island on Dec. 9 when it erupted, 24 were Australian citizens

and four others were residents of Australia.

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said the trauma had taken a toll on the families

of the victims.

"I don't think any one of us can begin to imagine what those families are facing in the coming weeks and months,"

for exams.

"We thought we were safe in the library," he said, adding that he and others had locked the library doors from the inside. Policemen broke them down, and at least one officer fired tear gas, he said, holding up an empty canister he said he picked up from the library floor.

About 2,000 people including students and families with young children gathered at New Delhi's iconic India Gate memorial to protest the Citizenship Amendment Act and reports of students demonstrating against the law who were beaten by police at several university campuses. Priyanka Gandhi, a leader of the opposition Congress party, participated at a sit-in at India Gate for two hours. Police stood on the sidelines of the demonstration.

The law's passage has triggered protests across India,

but Assam, the center of a decades-old movement against illegal immigrants, has seen the highest toll.

Assam police officials say officers have fatally shot five protesters in the state capital of Gauhati while attempting to restore order to a city that has been engulfed in demonstrations since last week. About 1,500 people have been arrested for violence including arson and vandalism, police spokesman G.P. Singh said, adding that authorities were reviewing surveillance videos and anticipated making more arrests.

Schools remain closed through Dec. 22, the government has blocked internet service statewide and a curfew has been imposed from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. Foreign journalists are not permitted to travel to India's northeastern region, including Assam, without a permit.

Asia

Baghdad mob kills teen and strings up his corpse

BAGHDAD (AP)—The body of a 16-year-old boy was hung from a traffic pole in a central Baghdad square Thursday, amid conflicting versions about how he was killed.

Security officials said the teen was wanted by police on drug-related charges and was running from security forces.

Other officials said the teen had fired a pistol in the air in an attempt to get protesters—who he felt were causing a disturbance—to move away from around his home.

The Associated Press initially reported that Iraqi officials, who frequently speak on condition of anonymity because of regulations, said the boy shot and killed six anti-government protesters before he was killed. The AP has found no evidence to support these initial claims.

Some videos circulating on social media showed the young man being beaten and dragged across a street. Other videos showed security forces



Posters of anti-government protesters who have been killed in demonstrations and their belongings are displayed in Tahrir Square, during ongoing protests in Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019.

blame Iran-backed militias for the attacks and see the violence as a campaign to instill fear and weaken their peaceful movement.

Influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr called those who killed the teen “terrorists” and warned that if they were not identified within 48 hours, he would order his militia to leave the square. Members of Saraya Salam, or Peace Brigades, are deployed in the square to protect protesters. Protesters refer to them as the “blue hats.”

The killing of the teenager was condemned by the wider protest movement in Tahrir Square, which said in a statement that the perpetrators were not part of their peaceful demonstrations.

“We can’t allow the image of our pure revolution to be distorted, so we declare that we are innocent as peaceful demonstrators to what happened this morning in Wathba Square,” the statement said.

Britain’s Boris Johnson talks with Trump, welcomes new lawmakers

LONDON (AP)—Britain’s new political landscape began to take shape Monday as triumphant Prime Minister Boris Johnson talked trade with President Donald Trump and gave a pep talk to his new Conservative Party lawmakers.

The incoming class of new Conservative legislators was so big—109 lawmakers—that organizers had to procure an extra 50 bottles of wine for the evening event, British tabloids said.

Lawmakers from all parties will be sworn in on Tuesday, the first day of the new session in Parliament.

Johnson’s Conservatives received a larger-than-expected majority in last week’s national election, galvanizing his efforts to secure parliamentary approval for his Brexit divorce deal with the European Union. Many of them are coming from parts of the country that for decades were strongholds of the opposition Labour Party. Overall, the Conservatives now have 365 of the House of Commons’ 650 seats.

Buoyed by the decisive win, Johnson plans to move fast on his campaign mantra to “get Brexit done.” That means ensuring a Brexit withdrawal agreement bill is passed in time for the U.K. to complete its historic departure from the European Union

by the Jan. 31 deadline.

Johnson spokesman James Slack said the government will introduce the EU withdrawal bill on Friday. It will be up to the speaker of the House of Commons to determine if Parliament holds its first major vote on the bill that same day or waits until early January after the Christmas recess.

The Brexit divorce bill is expected to receive strong support in Parliament due to the Conservatives’ new strong majority.

Johnson’s Downing Street office said Trump, a Brexit supporter who has praised Johnson in the past, congratulated Johnson again when they spoke Monday. It said the two leaders look forward to “continued cooperation on issues such as security and trade, including the negotiation of an ambitious free trade agreement.”

If the Brexit bill passes and Britain leaves the EU on time, the country will enter a transition period when EU rules and regulations would still apply in the country and people and goods would still be able to pass freely between the U.K. and the 27 remaining EU members.

Negotiators for the British government and the EU would then start trade talks with an eye toward reaching a comprehensive post-Brexit agreement.

with pointed guns surrounding a house where the teen had purportedly taken cover.

Dozens of people pointed their cellphones at the body dangling above them.

The violence underscored the growing fears and suspicions swirling around the

8-week-old protest movement, which engulfed Iraq on Oct. 1 when thousands took to the streets to decry government corruption, poor services and scarcity of jobs.

A string of mysterious attacks, including shootings and stabbings, by unknown groups

has put anti-government protesters on edge and eroded their faith in the ability of state security forces to protect them.

In recent days, abductions and assassinations of high-profile civil activists have stoked paranoia among demonstrators. Protesters largely

WORLD BRIEFS

Central African Republic ex-leader Bozize returns from exile

BANGUI, Central African Republic (AP)—Former Central African President Francois Bozize, who was ousted nearly seven years ago by a coalition of rebel groups, has returned from exile, his political party announced Monday. Bozize intends to address the nation in the coming days, said Bertin Bea, the secretary-general of the Kwa Na Kwa party, told journalists in the capital, Bangui. Bea didn’t say how Bozize had returned home, but a Central African court recently overturned an order prohibiting air companies from bringing Bozize to Bangui. Bozize’s supporters note how it was his overthrow that ushered in one of the most violent periods in the country’s history. The rebel coalition’s rule was so cruel that it led to the rise of another armed group, the anti-Balaka, and brutal sectarian conflict. The rebel coalition known as Seleka was made up mostly of Muslim rebels who had long complained of being marginalized by Bozize

and his government. The anti-Balaka’s hatred of Seleka’s brutal rule eventually led to Muslim civilians being targeted en masse, with tens of thousands being forced from the capital in 2014. Mosques were destroyed, and Muslims were beaten to the death in the streets and their bodies mutilated. Relatively peaceful elections were later held in 2016, though violence remains widespread outside the capital. Some feared his return to Bangui could cause political tensions to rise even more before next year’s presidential election.

3rd night of clashes as Lebanon puts off talks on new PM

BEIRUT (AP)—Supporters of Lebanon’s two main Shiite groups Hezbollah and Amal clashed with security forces and set fires to cars in the capital early Tuesday, apparently angered by a video circulating online that showed a man insulting Shiite figures. Police used tear gas and water cannons trying to disperse them. It was the third consecutive night of violence, and came hours

after Lebanon’s president postponed talks on naming a new prime minister, further prolonging the turmoil and unrest in the Mediterranean country. President Michel Aoun postponed the binding consultations with leaders of parliamentary blocs after the only candidate—caretaker Prime Minister Saad Hariri—failed to win the backing of the country’s largest Christian groups amid a worsening economic and financial crisis. The postponement followed a violent weekend in the small nation that saw the toughest crackdown on demonstrations in two months. Lebanese security forces repeatedly fired tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons to disperse hundreds of protesters in downtown Beirut in the worst violence since demonstrations against the political elite erupted in mid-October.

WWII allies, Germany mark 75 yrs since Battle of the Bulge

BASTOGNE, Belgium (AP)—Side by side, the Allies and former enemy Germany together marked the 75th anniversary of one of

the most important battles in World War II—the Battle of the Bulge, which stopped Adolf Hitler’s last-ditch offensive to turn the tide of the war. At dawn on Dec. 16, 1944, over 200,000 German soldiers started the most unexpected breakthrough through the dense woods of Belgium and Luxembourg’s hilly Ardennes. Making the most of the surprise move, the cold, freezing weather and weary U.S. troops, the Germans pierced the front line so deeply it came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. Initially outnumbered, U.S. troops delayed the attack enough in fierce fighting to allow reinforcements to stream in and turn the tide of the battle by Christmas. After a month of fighting, the move into Germany was unstoppable. U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper paid tribute to over 19,000 U.S. troops who died in one of the bloodiest battles in the nation’s history. “Their efforts not only defended America but also ensured that the peoples of Europe would be free again,” Esper said, calling the Battle of the Bulge “one of the greatest in American history.”

Focus



AP
Indian students perform a play during a protest against sexual violence against women in Ahmadabad, India, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

7 years after Delhi gang rape, BRUTAL INDIA ATTACKS CONTINUE

By EMILY SCHMALL
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW DELHI (AP)—Days after an alleged gang-rape victim was set on fire, a note was left at the family home of an 18-year-old set to testify in her own case against a man she had accused of rape.

“Consequences may be worse than what happened in Unnao,” the note read, alluding to the city in northern India where a woman was allegedly doused with gasoline and set ablaze by five men, including two she had accused of gang rape who were out on bail.

The teen and her family took the note to police. The accused man was arrested in July 2018 on the rape charge and was quickly released on bail. He was taken back into custody on Saturday, according to police constable Sudhir Bhati.

Sexual violence against women and girls is so common in India, the case was given only a few lines in one of the country’s leading dailies.

There have been several high-profile rape cases that have shocked the country in recent weeks, including the woman in Unnao, who was about to board a train for a court hearing in her case when she was allegedly set on fire earlier this month.

The latest incidents come around the seventh anniversary of a gang rape on a moving bus in New Delhi that galvanized massive protests and

inspired lawmakers to order the creation of fast-track courts dedicated to rape cases and stiffen penalties for those convicted of the crime.

In India, gruesome reports of rape and retaliatory killing are hauntingly familiar, and whether a report of rape rises above the din is largely determined by class and caste dynamics. But even if a case does become big news, it could have little effect on how the country’s overburdened court system works for most people, experts said.

After she was set on fire, the 23-year-old woman from Unnao was medevaced to a burns unit in New Delhi, where she later died.

Her death came just a day after police fatally shot four men who were being held as suspects in the gang rape and murder of a 27-year-old veterinarian near southern India’s tech hub of Hyderabad. The woman’s burned body was discovered by a passer-by late last month.

Before an investigation into whether the police shootings were justified, many people across India were cheering the result. Others condemned it.

“Nobody wants to invest in changing the system,” said Sunitha Krishnan, an activist and gang-rape survivor in Hyderabad. “You’ve just done some instant justice, closure, everybody’s moved on. And for most people, this is finished. But life doesn’t move on for hundreds of thousands of victims who are languishing for justice. And that’s the pathetic reality of this country.”

Those praising the police shooting contrasted it with the 2012 case in New Delhi—whose victim was dubbed “Nirbhaya,” or “Fearless,” by Indian media because rape victims can’t be identified under Indian law.

The case continued on Monday, the seventh anniversary of the brutal bus attack. The victim, a 23-year-old physiotherapy student, was head-

ing home from a movie with a male friend when six men lured them onto a private bus. They beat the man with a metal bar, raped the woman and used the bar to inflict massive internal injuries to her.

Six people were convicted for the crime, one of whom authorities say hanged himself in New Delhi’s Tihar prison in 2013. Another was a juvenile at the time of the attack and was sentenced to three years in a reform school. Four others were sentenced to death by hanging, including one man whose appeal for mercy—an appeal available only in capital punishment cases—remained pending with the Supreme Court.

Jitendra Kumar Jhat, the lawyer representing the 2012 victim’s parents, said to call it a “fast-track” court was ironic since it had been a year and a half since the Supreme Court had last confirmed the death penalty for the four men convicted in the case.

India’s judicial system’s “systemic

flaws are being exploited by criminals, and this sentence is not deterring anyone,” Jhat said.

That seven years later, the sentence of capital punishment has yet to be carried out enrages many in India and has motivated more extreme forms of protest.

Swati Maliwal, head of the Delhi Commission for Women, fell unconscious on the 13th day of a hunger strike undertaken outside Mahatma Gandhi’s mausoleum in New Delhi to demand lawmakers pass a bill that would force courts to carry out the executions of convicted rapists within six months of the crime.

According to the latest Indian government data, police registered 33,658 cases of rape in 2017—an average of 92 per day and a 35% jump from 2012. About 10,000 of the reported victims were children. The real figure is believed to be far higher because of the stigma of sexual violence in India.

The conviction rate over the same period rose 33%, from less than a quarter to about a third of all cases filed. Only 15 of the more than 200 reported murders with rape or gang rape in 2017 resulted in convictions that year, data showed.

“We are planning to make this a nationwide movement,” Maliwal said when she began her fast, done in response to the gang rape and killing in Hyderabad. “Rapes in this country have to end.”

Good Housekeeping

30 fun, some funny, 'Elf on the Shelf'

ideas to get you through the holiday season

By TAYLOR SEELY and
AMY HANELINE

It should be called "Elf off the Shelf," because those elves are hardly ever just sitting on a shelf.

In addition to hot cocoa, holiday movies, dazzling lights and mad dashes to the store, you also have to figure out a bazillion-and-one places to hide your kids' beloved "Elf on the Shelf."

It was so cute and such a good idea at first. Now it's just another task on the to-do list.

Fear not, thanks to creative parents on the internet, we gathered up some of the coolest, and most hilarious, ways to "hide" your elves.

Captured by Queen Elsa

Everyone has "Frozen" fever with the release of "Frozen 2." Let Queen Elsa use her magical powers on your elf. Let's just hope the kids find it before it melts.

Poking through a movie poster

That tricky little elf. He looks just like Will Ferrell and could be hard to find with his head poking through an "Elf" movie poster.

Returning from the North Pole with proof

Those smart elves. If your kids doubted they were going to the North Pole and reporting to Santa, they bring proof with a melted snowman.

With a little humor

What is it about poop and farts that make kids giggle? Either way, we're sure they will love this.

Or even a little more humor

We hope you have a sense of humor because this setup is a little gross. Alas, it's an idea!

Above the stockings

OK, duh. I know. This is an easy one. But kids get grumpy when they can't find stuff right away!

Inside the holiday wreath

Depending on how or where your wreath is located, kids may have a hard time finding it.

Inside the family photo area

Unless you have a tradition

of decorating the photo area with photos, I'm betting your kid rarely frequents the area. Heck, throw a frame around the little guy. #Camouflage

Tucked in the toys

Sure, the kids play with their toys all the time. But tucking the little elf neatly into a toy box, or buried at the bottom of it? I just don't have faith that kids will be patient enough to dig through.

Peeking out of a Rice Krispies cereal box

All the cutting and positioning will require a considerable amount of time and skill, so you better display that cereal-eating elf proudly! This should get a good laugh and low stress because the kids should find it quickly. Maybe snap a pic of the perfection before the kids get to it.

Scaling the wall with bows

The obviousness of this display is what will make it so difficult. What kid would think the family elf would "hide" in such an open space?

Climbing the tree

Most trees have 5 million and three ornaments, to be exact. Adding an elf to the mix will likely blend in and be nearly invisible.

On the coffee table display

Especially if you have a little tray or decorations that draw attention to the area, kids should find this relatively quickly.

In the crafts area

If you simply put him in the crafts area, this might be hard. But if you create a little display, like the one below where the elf is shown painting, it will be easier.

In the bathroom

I'm going to go out on a limb here and assume your kids brush their teeth and maybe even shower in the morning. Please say yes. If that's correct, they'll have no problem finding the elf.

Hanging from the curtains

You may have to hint and tell your kids to look upward.

Exercising on the kitchen counter or table

What a funny little surprise it will be to see the elf get his arm day on. And let's be honest, elf needs arm day.

Ziplining to the tree

This is as obvious as a display can get if you have the elf ziplining across the room to the tree. But this is a lot of work, too. Maybe save this for the grand finale. Or at least wait until you have a bunch of people over so you can show off.

Stealing from the piggy bank

This might be hard if you don't readily display the piggy bank, so move it to a spot that's easily accessible. And uh, maybe consider putting a "just kidding" note on the elf so the kids don't actually think he's a thief.



The Elf on the Shelf balloon makes its way down New York's Sixth Avenue during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Thursday, Nov. 28, 2019, in New York.

Floating in the bathtub

Unless you do bath time in the morning, you'll probably want to give your kids a hint on this one.

Playing with the dog

Make it look like the elf is playing tug-o-war with a stuffed dog.

In the popcorn bowl

Forgot to place the elf one morning? No worries. Tell the kids the elf went out for a day trip and will return home in the evening. Then at night, pop some popcorn and invite the kids into the kitchen to surprise them with the elf's return.

Hanging from the chimney

Again, sometimes the more "simple" the spot, the more difficult it is to find the elf.

Making snow angels

All you need and some flour or sugar and that elf can make snow angels on your countertop.

Hiding in the presents

If you've got lots of presents with intricate patterns of wrapping paper, this might be quite difficult for the little ones to handle. Hints are always helpful.

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

†Matilde Iglecias Sablan Diaz

Born to Life on March 14, 1947 Born to Eternal Life on December 9, 2019



In her new life, she now joins her:

Parents: Gregorio Torres Sablan
Rosa Iglecias Sablan

Parents-in-Law: Vicente Terlaje Diaz
Magdalena Pangelinan Diaz

Brother: Henry Iglecias Sablan

Sister-in-Law: Arlene Pangelinan Diaz

Brother-in-Law: Joe Pangelinan Diaz

Her memories will always live in the hearts of her:

Husband: Norbert Pangelinan Diaz

Son: Edwin Gregory Sablan Diaz & Jennie Duenas Diaz
(Adriana Maddie Duenas Diaz)

Brothers & Sisters and their Family:

Jesus I. & Rosalia D. Sablan & Children
Jose I. & Anna V. Sablan & Children
Edward I. & Dorothy L. Sablan & Children
Selina S. & Romeo M. Deleon & Children
Magdalena S. & Jose A. Mendiola & Children
Bertha S. Salas & Darrel Brown & Children

Brother & Sister-in-Laws and their Family:

Dorothea P. Diaz & Children
Thomas P. & Frances M. Diaz & Children
Mary D. & Frank S. Aguon & Children
Patricia D. & Henry Santos & Children
James P. & Nenita N. Diaz & Children
Vicente P. & Julie Diaz & Children
Nadine H. Sablan & Children

†Matilde will also be missed by numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, friends, and other relatives.

Daily Rosary is being offered at San Jose Church at 7:00 p.m., until December 18, 2019. On Monday, December 23, 2019, her body will be escorted from Borja Funeral Homes to Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 8:00 a.m. followed by Responso. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11:00 a.m. followed by the burial at the Veterans Cemetery.

Your thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.
Norbert Pangelinan Diaz and Family

Life & Style

Stars, fans converge for 'Rise of Skywalker' premiere

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Stormtroopers marched and Chewbacca stepped out of a black sport utility vehicle to cheers as "Star Wars" made its triumphant return Monday for the world premiere of its latest installment, "The Rise of Skywalker."

Fans formed a living tribute to the franchise alongside the blue carpet on Hollywood Boulevard where series stars Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Adam Driver and others would arrive. Fans dressed as Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia dotted the crowd, eagerly awaiting the event's start among an assortment of Stormtroopers, bounty hunters and an imposing Darth Vader.

The premiere will be the first time anyone outside a select group will see the ninth film in the core "Star Wars" story. "Rise of Skywalker" arrives in theaters Friday. Attendees had a chance to walk past an exhibit lined with numerous photos from previous films including a portrait with the late Carrie Fisher and her daughter Billie Lourd, another



Daisy Ridley, right, takes a selfie with a fan as she arrives at the world premiere of "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker" on Monday, Dec. 16, 2019, in Los Angeles

photo with Mark Hamill hugging Fisher and several Stormtrooper uniforms.

Fans cheered the early arrivals, which included the droids C-3PO and R2-D2, a two-column march of Stormtroopers and Billy Dee Wil-

liams, Richard E. Grant and Ian McDiarmid.

Few films have captured the popular imagination like 1977's "Star Wars," which has sparked three film trilogies, TV shows, toys and more. "The Rise of Skywalker" is

one of the year's most-anticipated releases, in part because filmmakers have promised a conclusion to the story of the Skywalker clan that includes Luke, Leia and their father Anakin, who became Darth Vader.

In reversal, Hallmark will reinstate same-sex marriage ads

NEW YORK (AP)—The Hallmark Channel, reversing what it called a "wrong decision," said Sunday it will reinstate commercials featuring same-sex couples that it had pulled following a complaint from a conservative group.

The earlier decision by Crown Media, Hallmark's parent company, to pull several ads for the wedding planning site Zola featuring two brides kissing at the altar had launched a storm of protest. Celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres and William Shatner criticized the move and the

hashtag #BoycottHallmark-Channel was trending on Twitter at one point.

"The Crown Media team has been agonizing over this decision as we've seen the hurt it has unintentionally caused," said a statement issued Sunday evening by Hallmark Cards CEO Mike Perry. "Said simply, they believe this was the wrong decision. ... We are truly sorry for the hurt and disappointment this has caused."

Zola, the wedding planning site that made the ads, said it was relieved that the decision to pull them had been re-

versed. In an email to The Associated Press, the company said it would be in touch with Hallmark "regarding a potential return to advertising."

"We are humbled by everyone who showed support not only for Zola, but for all LGBTQ couples and families who express their love on their wedding day, and every day," said a statement Sunday evening from the company's chief marketing officer, Mike Chi.

The controversy erupted during one of the Hallmark Channel's busiest seasons, when its slate of holiday programming

turns it into one of television's most-watched networks. Between Dec. 2-8, Hallmark was the No. 3 network in prime-time viewership, behind Fox News and ESPN.

The LGBT advocacy group GLAAD also expressed relief at the reversal. Its president and CEO, Sarah Kate Ellis, said Hallmark's "decision to correct its mistake sends an important message to LGBTQ people and represents a major loss for fringe organizations like One Million Moms, whose sole purpose is to hurt families like mine."

Loughlin's lawyers say prosecutors are hiding key evidence

BOSTON (AP)—Lawyers for actress Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband say federal prosecutors are holding back crucial evidence that could prove the couple's innocence in a college admissions scandal that has ensnared dozens of wealthy parents.

In a court motion filed Friday in Boston's court, the couple's lawyers asked a judge to force the Justice Department to turn over certain FBI records and other evidence that could be used to mount a defense for the "Full House" star and her husband, Mossimo Giannulli.

Lawyers for eight other parents accused in the case are supporting the request. Some have filed separate motions

accusing prosecutors of withholding evidence.

"This court's intervention is urgently needed," the couple's lawyers wrote in the filing. "The government is applying a flawed disclosure standard that systematically deprives Giannulli and Loughlin of information necessary to prepare their case and ensure a fair trial."

Loughlin and Giannulli are accused of paying \$500,000 to get their two daughters into the University of Southern California as recruits to the crew team, even though neither participated in the sport. The money was funneled through a sham charity operated by college admissions consultant William "Rick" Singer, who has pleaded guilty to orches-

trating the scheme.

Officials at USC have said the couple's daughters are no longer enrolled.

In previous court documents, prosecutors said the couple knew their payments were being used to bribe a USC sports official. Prosecutors said the nature of the payments were made clear by Singer.

But the couple's lawyers said Loughlin and Giannulli believed the payments were "legitimate donations" that would support Singer's charity or go directly to USC as a fundraising gift. The lawyers said they think prosecutors are withholding evidence supporting that claim because it could undermine their case.

"The government appears

to be concealing exculpatory evidence that helps show that both defendants believed all of the payments they made would go to USC itself—for legitimate, university-approved purposes—or to other legitimate charitable causes," the lawyers wrote.

Prosecutors have not responded to the filing in court and declined to provide comment.

The couple's lawyers are demanding to see FBI reports from the agency's interviews with Singer. Specifically, they want to know how Singer characterized his dealings with parents, and whether he told agents he was upfront about the bribes or presented them as legitimate donations.

Disney paid more than \$4 billion to acquire the Star Wars franchise in 2012 and the recent trilogy started with J.J. Abrams' "The Force Awakens" in 2015. While it returned beloved characters from the original trilogy to the big screen for the first time since 1983, the story has focused on a new generation of characters played by Ridley, Driver, Boyega and others.

Fans remain divided on 2017's "The Last Jedi," which showed a late-in-life Skywalker as a bitter recluse who cut himself off from his friends and broader conflicts embroiling the fictional far, far away galaxy.

Disney has not yet announced film plans post-"Rise

of Skywalker." Work on a trilogy set outside the Skywalker story has been halted, and no new stand-alone films have been announced since the poor showing of 2018's "Solo: A Star Wars Story."

Regardless of the reception to "Rise of Skywalker," Disney has already delivered Star Wars fans two wins in 2019. Its theme parks in Florida and California opened massive Star Wars-themed expansions this year where guests are essentially transported to a distant planet. The company's new streaming service, Disney Plus, also debuted the first live-action "Star Wars" television series in "The Mandalorian," which introduced a popular new character: Baby Yoda.

Weinstein: Sex assault charges have made me 'forgotten man'

NEW YORK (AP)—Harvey Weinstein defended himself as a pioneer in advancing the careers of women in the film industry in the wake of scores of sexual misconduct allegations that launched the #MeToo movement.

"I feel like the forgotten man," Weinstein said in an interview published Sunday in the New York Post. "I made more movies directed by women and about women than any filmmaker, and



Weinstein

I'm talking about 30 years ago. I'm not talking about now when it's vogue. I did it first! I pioneered it!"

"It all got eviscerated because of what happened," Weinstein said in the interview. "My work has been forgotten."

Weinstein spoke out days after a tentative \$25 million settlement was reached between him and more than two dozen actresses and former employee who have accused the movie mogul of a range of sexual misconduct, including claims of rape. The deal wouldn't require Weinstein to pay anything out of his own pocket, nor would he have to admit wrongdoing.

He has denied allegations of nonconsensual sex. He faces a Jan. 6 trial on rape and sexual assault charges in state court, where he has pleaded not guilty.

"Harvey Weinstein is trying to gaslight society again," more than 20 accus-

ers said in a statement issued Sunday. The accusers include Rosanna Arquette, Ashley Judd and Rose McGowan.

The Associated Press does not identify alleged victims of sex crimes unless they give their consent, which those accusers have done.

"He says in a new interview he doesn't want to be forgotten. Well, he won't be. He will be remembered as a sexual predator and an unrepentant abuser who took everything and deserves nothing," the statement said.

"He will be remembered by the collective will of countless women who stood up and said enough. We refuse to let this predator rewrite his legacy of abuse," it said.

Lawyer Gloria Allred, who represents a number of accusers, said the ongoing criminal case against Weinstein should be the priority right now.

"The issues and charges in the criminal case should be the sole focus at this time," Allred said in a statement to ABC News.

"Whatever he has done professionally for women may or may not be relevant at the time of sentencing if he is convicted," Allred said. "For now, any attempt by him to recast his tattered reputation or to appear to ask for sympathy will only serve to trigger many of those who allege that they are victims of Mr. Weinstein."

25 years later, Mariah Carey's Christmas original is No.1

NEW YORK (AP)—Christmas has come early for Mariah Carey: the pop star's original holiday classic, "All I Want for Christmas Is You," has reached the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart 25 years after its release.

Billboard announced that the song topped this week's chart, giving Carey her 19th No. 1 of

her career. She is only behind the Beatles, who have had 20 songs top the Hot 100 chart.

Each holiday season Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" begins to climb the Billboard charts as its popularity resurfaces. Last year the song hit a peak at No. 3 and set a new one-day streaming record on Spotify.

"All I Want for Christmas Is You" is the first holiday to top the Hot 100 chart since "The

Chipmunk Song" in 1958-59.

The song is from Carey's 1994 album, "Merry Christ-

mas," which is currently No. 1 on the Billboard R&B albums chart. Carey wrapped her All

I Want for Christmas Is You Tour on Sunday at New York's Madison Square Garden.

Formula 1 heiress' jewel collection reported stolen in raid

LONDON (AP)—London police are investigating the theft of a large cache of "high value jewelry" reported stolen from the palatial home of heiress Tamara Ecclestone, the daughter of former Formula 1 chief Bernie Ecclestone.

The Sun newspaper said the stolen jewelry was worth about 50 million pounds (\$66 million) and included precious rings, earrings and a Cartier bangle Ecclestone received as a wedding present.

The Metropolitan Police said officers went to the home on Friday evening after receiving reports of a burglary. No arrests have been made.

"Tamara and family are well but obviously angry and shaken by the incident," a family statement read.

The family's private security team is cooperating with police, the statement said.



In this Monday, Sept. 2, 2013 file photo, Tamara Ecclestone arrives for the World Premiere of the film Rush, at a central London cinema in Leicester Square. AP

10 films make shortlist for Oscars' best international film

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ten international films, including widely acclaimed offerings from South Korea, Spain and Senegal, are on the shortlist of movies vying for Academy Award nominations.

The best international feature shortlist announced Monday by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences includes Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite," Pedro Almodovar's semi-autobiographical "Pain and Glory" and "Atlantics," Senegal's entry from history-making director Mati Diop.

In May, Diop became the first black woman to compete for the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival. That honor went to "Parasite," while "Atlantics" won the festival's Grand Prix honor. If "Parasite" or "Atlantics" receive nominations, they would mark the first for South Korea and Senegal, respectively.

It is the first year the Oscar formerly will be awarded under a new name: best international feature film. The category was previously known as the best foreign language film.

The 10 short-listed films are: the Czech Republic's

"The Painted Bird"; Estonia's "Truth and Justice"; France's "Les Misérables"; Hungary's "Those Who Remained"; North Macedonia's "Honeyland"; Poland's "Corpus Christi"; Russia's "Beanpole"; Senegal's "Atlantics"; South Korea's "Parasite" and Spain's "Pain and Glory."

The shortlist was culled from 91 eligible films.

The film academy announced nine shortlists Monday in categories including best documentary feature, visual effects and original song.

"Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker," which will be released on Friday, appears on two shortlists for best original score and visual effects. Also on the visual effects shortlist are the blockbuster "Avengers: Endgame" and the upcoming musical "Cats."

No song from "Cats" made the original song shortlist, but two songs from "The Lion King" did: Elton John's "Never Too Late" and "Spirit" by Beyoncé.

Nominations for the 92nd annual Academy Awards will be announced on Jan. 13. The Oscars will be held on Feb. 9 in Los Angeles.

National Spelling Bee will have fewer wild cards next year

By **BEN NUCKOLS**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Scripps National Spelling Bee will have fewer participants next year. Whether it will have fewer champions remains to be seen.

Six months after the bee ended in an unprecedented eight-way tie because organizers ran out of words that were difficult enough to trip up the best spellers, Scripps on Tuesday announced the first in a series of reforms to the competition. While bee organiz-

ers aren't saying how they'll come up with a more challenging word list, the bee is reducing the number of wild-card entrants, which ought to streamline an event that was becoming unwieldy.

The bee will have roughly 140 wild-card entrants, down from nearly 300 this year. That means the competition would top out at about 400 spellers. This year, there were 562 kids in the bee, which is open to students through the eighth grade.

And unlike in previous

years, wild cards will be available only to seventh- and eighth-graders. There were dozens of first-timers and younger spellers among this year's wild cards, and current and former spellers said they were concerned the program had strayed from its intended purpose and was letting in nearly anyone able to pay the \$1,500 entry fee, plus travel, lodging and expenses. Spellers who qualify via the traditional route, by winning a regional bee, have their trip to nationals paid for by sponsors.

There were 17 wild cards age 9 or younger this year, and none survived to join the 50 spellers who made the finals. The preliminary rounds featured wild-card spellers who were clearly overwhelmed by such words as "tendon," "vestibule," "allocation" and "gyro."

Fourteen-year-old Simone Kaplan of Davie, Florida, who just missed being part of the octet of champions in this year's bee, said she noticed the struggles of some younger wild-card spellers.

Woman serving time fears boyfriend's love will fade

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 25-year-old female currently serving a nine-year prison sentence. It is the first time I have ever been in trouble (wrong place, wrong time). My boyfriend is 24. We've been together 2 1/2 years and have had our ups and downs (mostly ups). I am truly in love with him, and he tells me he will always be there for me.

I have been in prison for five months so far, and he hasn't missed a visit or a phone call. He also makes sure I have money on my books.

I'm worried that somewhere down the road, since we're so young, he will meet someone and move on. In a way, I would kind of understand—I don't want his life to stop because mine has. But I also don't want to lose him. How do I keep our relationship strong, or should I let him go?

LOCKED UP IN DELAWARE

DEAR LOCKED UP: Nine years is a long time, and sometimes life happens in the interim. I can't predict what will happen, and you shouldn't either. Take things a day at a time. Keep the lines of communication open and honest.

Because things are going well, do not "let him go." If the romance ends, so be it. But if it does, appreciate that he seems to be a staunch friend and ally.

DEAR ABBY: I love my wife. We have been married for 38 years. However, she does something that drives me crazy.

I have a hard time going to sleep at night, and if I'm disturbed in those first few minutes of sleep, I'm up all night. We both agreed that when we say "goodnight," it means no more talking or loud noises. But almost every night after saying "goodnight," she wakes me up with something she HAS to say or explore. If it was an emergency, I wouldn't mind, but it's usually something of no consequence that could wait until morning.

I have tried ignoring her, pretending to be asleep, saying "goodnight again" in a rough tone of voice and getting angry. Nothing seems to work. I would appreciate some advice for dealing with this.

SLEEPLESS IN TEXAS

DEAR SLEEPLESS: A solid night's sleep is crucial for good health. Tell your wife to keep a notepad by the side of the bed and jot down what she wants to discuss the next morning. However, if she persists in awakening you, get up and go into another room. And continue doing it until your wife agrees to show more consideration.

DEAR ABBY: I have known my friend "Midge" for more than 60 years. We live in different states now, but keep in touch online. While our views are polar opposites on just about everything, we have remained friends.

Over the last year, it seems Midge has reverted to being a wild teenager. She is smoking pot, got tattooed and is doing a lot of partying. Recently, she posted a very lengthy missive, including dozens of pictures, about how much she misses her

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



ex-boyfriend. Abby, they broke up 10 years ago! I asked her sister about her bizarre behavior and was told, "Oh, that's just Midge." Is it time to let go of the friendship?

NOT THE SAME IN CALIFORNIA

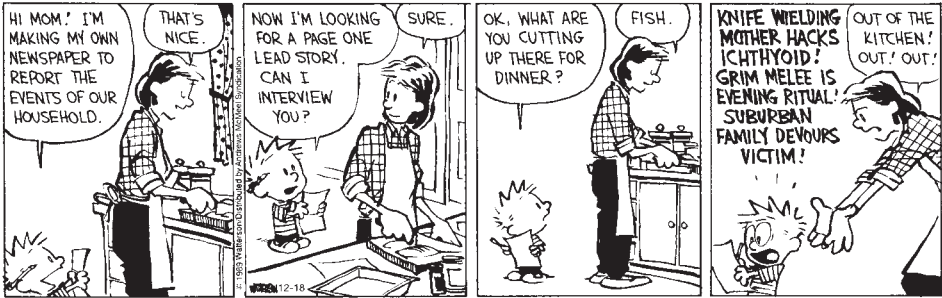
DEAR NOT THE SAME: Assuming that pot is legal in the state where Midge resides, she's doing nothing illegal, immoral or that will get her pregnant out of wedlock. Because you're concerned about her, call Midge to hear how she is. Sometimes an abrupt change in personality can be a symptom of a physical or mental health issue.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

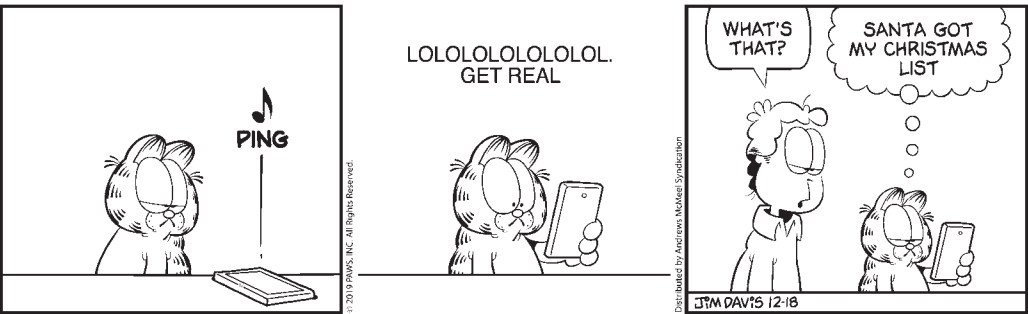
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



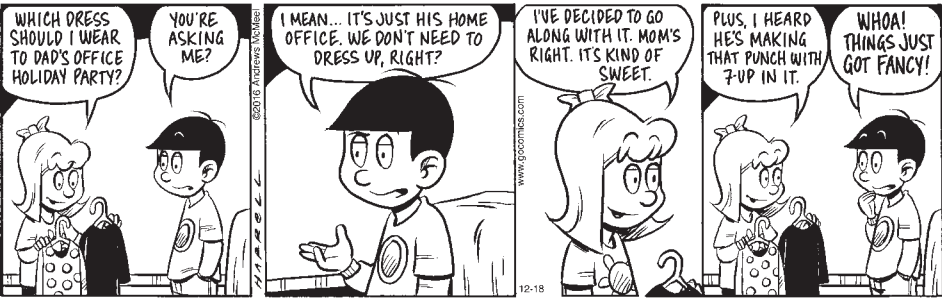
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Mint product

5 Rainbow

8 Trans-action

12 Sicilian spouter

13 Actor Gibson

14 Roof overhang

15 Arm of the Atlantic

17 Egyptian deity

18 Prepare to drive

19 Trattoria offerings

21 Answer an invite

24 "Incidentally," in a text

25 "Dirty Jobs" host Mike

28 Stow cargo

30 Feedbag tidbit

33 Pub order

34 Appoint-ments

35 Poem of praise

36 "Certainly!"

37 Teen fave

38 Japanese noodle

39 Three, in Rome

41 — -do- well

43 Most recent

46 Union foes

50 Opposite of "fer"

51 Lefty

54 Barn roof

55 Deluge

56 Madon-na's "La — Bonita"

57 Rim

58 Shad

59 German refusal

2 Oklahoma tribe

3 Concern-ing

4 Character

5 Early hrs.

6 R&B singer

7 Applaud

8 Believer of a sort

9 Clint of "Gran Torino"

10 Athletic shoe brand

11 Minus

16 Some printers

20 Fortas and Lincoln

22 — the Impaler

23 "Cry, the Beloved Country" author

25 Shaft of light

26 Flamenco cheer

27 White House area

29 Takeout order?

31 Fuss

32 Sawbuck

34 Conks out

38 Raga-muffin

40 Actress Zellweger

42 "Guinness Book" suffix

43 Cathedral area

44 "Zounds!"

45 Russian ruler

47 Church section

48 Island near Java

49 Graceful bird

52 Acapulco gold

53 Guitar's kin

Solution time: 23 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-18

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christina Aguilera, 39; Katie Holmes, 41; Brad Pitt, 56; Steven Spielberg, 73.

Happy Birthday: Rethink each move you make. Certainty will be necessary this year if you want to get ahead. Strategic decisions will help you position yourself for new beginnings, but first, tidy up whatever you've left dangling. This is a year of preparation, replacement and setting the stage for what's to come. Set a positive pattern, and repeat until you reach your goal. Your numbers are 2, 8, 15, 21, 27, 34, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Consider what you can afford to spend before you open your wallet. A positive change can be made if you refuse to let outsiders cause uncertainty. Stay focused on what it is you want to do, and don't venture off your chosen path. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Open up about the way you feel, what you want to do and your intentions regarding money, lifestyle and love. Personal gains are within reach if you are strategic in the way you use your time and your skills. Romance is encouraged. *****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Use your intelligence, and refuse to let anyone interfere with what you want to pursue. Listen to your conscience, not what others try to make you believe. Be direct, and act on facts, not assumptions. Make health a priority. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Put everything in perspective when dealing with personal and emotional matters. It's essential to keep a clear head and focus on what's

important. Reach out to those you want to touch base with before the year comes to a close. ****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Get out and enjoy some festive cheer with your peers. You are best to listen attentively and refrain from sharing too much personal information. Knowledge is power, and the insight you gain through observation will be priceless. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): How you handle others will determine how you end this year. Tie up loose ends, say what's on your mind and reveal what you are intending to do moving forward. Listen to complaints and suggestions, and fine-tune your plans. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Someone will take advantage of your vulnerability if you let your emotions take over. At the first sign of pressure, revert to pleasantries and light conversation. Take time to think matters through. If you act in haste, you'll make a mistake. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Make plans with friends or relatives for upcoming events. Offer physical assistance to someone who takes on the brunt of the work, and see what you can do to help. The reward for your effort will be priceless. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Look at the possibilities, be realistic and choose your path. Get together with people who lift you up, not those who bring you down. A change at home will turn out better than anticipated. Listen to your heart, not hearsay. **

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):

Expand your knowledge, interests and relationships with others. Take time to listen and to be a part of the changes taking place in your own backyard. Unity will encourage greater strength and happy endings. Romance is on the rise. *****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):

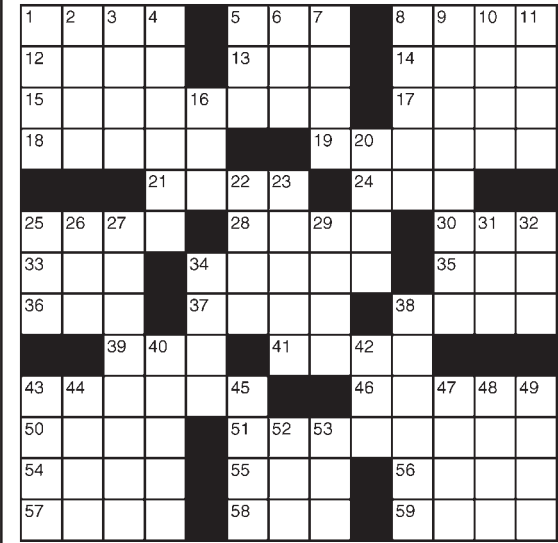
Be observant, and you will realize that someone is not totally honest with you. Ask questions, be direct and don't give in if you feel you are being taken advantage of by someone you thought you could trust. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):

Look at the possibilities, and consider what you want to do moving forward. Don't take what others say as gospel. Acting on false information will lead to disappointment. Emotional matters should be handled with honesty and integrity. ***

Birthday Baby:

You are intuitive, innovative and secretive. You are industrious and unpredictable. Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn. Copyright 2019 Andrews McMeel Syndication



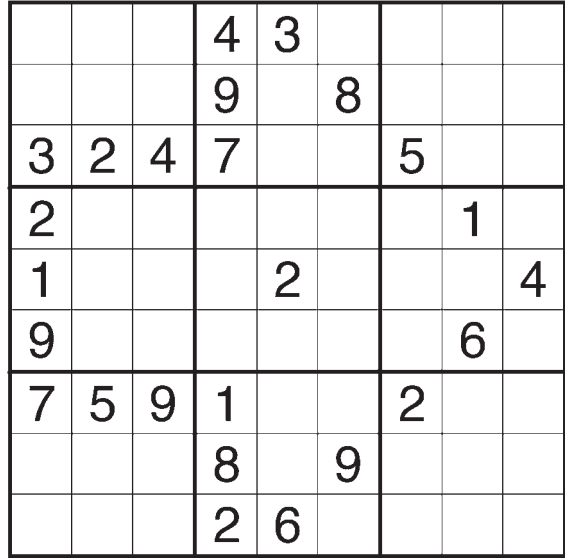
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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



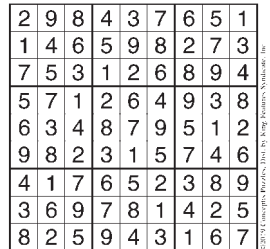
Difficulty Level ★★★

12/18

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer



Difficulty Level **

12/17

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

FRESH FARM EGGS

Solution: 9 letters

E B S L E B A L I A U Q L F R
G R G O O S E Y H C N U L D R
R E U C E G R N E H E A E E N
A A A T A F O H E Z I L H E Q
L K E S A M A A I D K C S U S
E F U R E R L S O C I T I T C
T A M L D T E Z I R S C E E R
S S E U H D P E P L R H I T S A
A T C Y Y N O O M E D I U M
T K A T B A C F S E N E B A B
R O L O C A O H H C T A H L L
N A I H L O O S G I C M E L E
S L E L D P K A H O E Y O L K
E D Y E L L O W N G S P O O C
S A V O R Y L I A D I N N E R

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12/18

Bacon, Benedict, Boil, Breakfast, Cake, Clean, Color, Cook, Coops, Daily, Diets, Dinner, Dozen, Duck, Farm, Food, Fry, Goose, Hard, Hatch, Healthy, Hen, Labels, Laid, Large, Locally, Lunch, Medium, Mega, Nests, Omelet, Pickled, Poached, Quail, Quiche, Richer, Room Temperature, Safe, Salt, Sausage, Savory, Scramble, Shell, Shop, Size, Small, Taste, Type, Wash, White, Yellow, Yolk

Yesterday's Answer: Leopard

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Mavs end Bucks' 18-game winning streak



MILWAUKEE (AP)—The Bucks have little time to reflect on the end of their 18-game winning streak.

Milwaukee's impressive run was halted Monday night when Seth Curry and Kristaps Porzingis each scored 26 points to help the Dallas Mavericks hang on for a 120-116 victory even without star guard Luka Dončić.

Milwaukee, which dropped to 24-4 with its first loss since a 103-100 setback Nov. 8 at Utah, next hosts LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers (24-3) on Thursday in a matchup of conference leaders.

"It's going to be a test for us," said Giannis Antetokounmpo, who led the Bucks with 48 points and 14 rebounds. "The Lakers are one of the best teams in the league. We've got to play good basketball. We've got to move the ball. Obviously as a team, we don't want to lose two in a row."

The winning streak was the Bucks' longest since a franchise-record 20 consecutive victories by the 1970-71 championship team that featured Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, then known as Lew Alcindor, and Oscar Robertson.

Dallas led comfortably for most of the fourth quarter until the final half-minute. Tim Hardaway Jr. hit the second of two free throws to make it 119-114 with 7.6 seconds left. Antetokounmpo scored on a layup and was fouled, but missed the free throw. Sterling Brown grabbed the offensive rebound, but his putback was blocked by Porzingis.

"I'm proud of the way the guys fought to the very last second tonight," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "To find a way to be close in the fourth quarter and have an offensive rebound and give ourselves a chance, I think it's just a sign of the competitive



Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo fouls Dallas Mavericks' Tim Hardaway Jr. during the second half of an NBA game Monday, Dec. 16, 2019, in Milwaukee. The Mavericks won, 120-116.

nature of this group."

Dončić sat out with a sprained right ankle, while the Bucks were missing injured point guard Eric Bledsoe.

Milwaukee trailed 86-76 entering the fourth quarter and pulled to 99-92 before Porzingis hit back-to-back 3-pointers from long range. The Bucks got no closer until the final 23 seconds.

Dallas was 16 of 41 from 3-point range, including four 3s each by Curry and Porzingis. The Bucks went 11 of 41 from beyond the arc.

"I hit those two deep 3s but even then, Giannis was right there in front of me," Porzingis said. "They know we are a pretty good shooting team. But we have so many weapons and anybody on any given night can score 20-plus

points. That's the dangerous thing about us. Tonight, Seth played great. It's kind of hard to play against a team that has so many options."

Kyle Korver added a season-high 17 points for Milwaukee, including five 3-pointers.

Milwaukee trailed 69-67 when Antetokounmpo went to the bench with 6:32 left in the third quarter, having scored all 11 of the Bucks' points in the period. Dallas led 75-69 when Antetokounmpo returned after a two-minute breather, and the Mavericks pushed the margin to 80-69.

Dallas was 7 of 13 beyond the arc in the first quarter en route to a 36-22 lead entering the second period.

"I've been in this league a long time and an 18-game winning streak is a spectacular

demonstration of how good a team is," Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle said. "But you're not going to win every game to finish the season. We just felt that if we came out and really concentrated on ourselves, with a pretty simple game plan, we give ourselves a chance."

Rockets 109, Spurs 107

In Houston, Russell Westbrook scored 31 points, James Harden had 28 and Houston set a franchise record by overcoming a 25-point deficit to beat San Antonio.

The comeback eclipsed the 23-point deficit Houston faced in a 110-107 victory against Portland on Jan. 22, 1977.

Houston fell behind early as Harden shot 4 of 17 in the first

half. He finished 10 for 29.

The Spurs managed just 35 points in the second half after setting a season high for first-half scoring and leading 72-53 at the break. LaMarcus Aldridge led San Antonio with 19 points and 13 rebounds.

Thunder 109, Bulls 106

In Oklahoma City, Chris Paul hit five 3-pointers in the fourth quarter and the Thunder erased a 26-point second-quarter deficit to rally past Chicago.

Paul took over in the fourth, going 5 for 5 from deep and scoring 19 of his 30 points. His fourth 3 of the period put Oklahoma City ahead 101-100, its first lead since the opening seconds. Paul also had nine rebounds and 10 assists.

The Bulls tied it at 106 before Steven Adams put the Thunder ahead with a free throw and Paul added two more in the final five seconds.

Zach LaVine finished with 39 points for the Bulls.

Grizzlies 118, Heat 111

In Memphis, Rookie guard Ja Morant had 20 points and 10 assists to lead the Grizzlies over Miami.

Jonas Valanciunas finished with 21 points and 10 rebounds as the Grizzlies won for the fourth time in five games.

Miami had won four of five, including three overtime victories. Jimmy Butler had 25 points and eight assists, and Tyler Herro scored 22.

Raptors 133, Cavaliers 113

In Toronto, Pascal Siakam scored 33 points, Kyle Lowry had 20 points and 11 assists, and the Raptors topped the struggling Cleveland Cavaliers.

Norman Powell scored 26 points, Serge Ibaka had 14 and OG Anunoby added 12 as the Raptors won for the 11th time in 14 home games. The defending NBA champions have won back-to-back at home after losing three straight on their own court.

Collin Sexton scored 25 points, Darius Garland had 20 and Tristan Thompson 18 as the Cavaliers lost for the 16th time in 18 games.

Wizards 133, Pistons 119

In Detroit, Bradley Beal scored 15 of his 35 points in the first quarter, and Washington took control with some torrid shooting before holding off the Pistons.

The Pistons played without injured stars Blake Griffin and Andre Drummond, and Washington shot 81% (17 of 21) from the field in the first quarter. The Wizards also made all three of their 3-point attempts and all six of their free throws in the opening period, building a 43-31 lead.

Isaiah Thomas returned from a calf injury and scored 23 points for Washington. Davis Bertans added 17 as the Wizards snapped a four-game losing streak.

Derrick Rose and Markieff Morris each scored 22 for Detroit.

Trail Blazers 111, Suns 110

In Phoenix, Damian Lillard scored 27 points, including a crucial three-point play with 26 seconds left, and Portland bounced back from a 16-point deficit in the first half to beat the Suns.

With the Blazers trailing 110-108, Lillard drove straight through the lane and made a layup while crashing into Aron Baynes, who was called for a blocking foul. Lillard hit the free throw to make it 111-110, and Phoenix couldn't score on its final possession as Ricky Rubio's 3-point attempt bounced off the rim with two seconds left.

CJ McCollum led the Trail Blazers with 30 points.

FIFA files \$2M Swiss courts claim against Blatter, Platini

ZURICH (AP)—FIFA filed court claims in Switzerland on Monday against Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini to recover more than \$2 million from an irregular payment that led to both men being banned from international soccer.

FIFA said in a statement that any money recovered, plus interest, would be "fully channelled back into football development, which is where the money should have gone in the first place."

As FIFA president in 2011, Blatter approved paying Platini's request to receive uncon-

tracted salary for advisory work done from 1998-2002. Elected president of European soccer body UEFA in 2007, Platini was widely expected to succeed Blatter at FIFA.

Platini's FIFA campaign was effectively ended when details of the payment emerged in September 2015 in fallout from American and Swiss federal investigations of international soccer.

The former France great has consistently denied wrongdoing and said he paid taxes and social charges—potentially amounting to



hundreds of thousands of Swiss francs—to Swiss authorities due on the FIFA payment.

Platini served a four-year ban confirmed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Blatter's six-year ban expires in October 2021.

Any Platini comeback can be blocked by FIFA code of ethics rules, which require him to pay a fine of 60,000 Swiss francs (\$61,000) imposed four years ago.

Platini has declined to pay while he is challenging his ban at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg,

France. Non-payment of any restitution ordered by a fresh Swiss court ruling could also delay his planned return to soccer.

"They (FIFA) will try to use what they want so that I don't come back, I am sure," Platini told The Associated Press in October.

Lawyers for Platini have also prepared a court filing in Switzerland against UEFA to receive up to one year's payments potentially due in his former employment contract, worth 3 million Swiss francs (\$3.05 million) in annual salary and bonus.

Brees sets TD mark as Saints crush Colts



NEW OR-

LEANS (AP)—

Drew Brees trotted along the sideline holding his helmet and a Hall of Fame-bound ball in his left hand while using his right hand to wave and blow kisses to an adoring Superdome crowd.

Another milestone, another memory, for an undersized and once underestimated player who has broken just about every significant record a quarterback can break and doesn't look anywhere near done at age 40.

Brees became the NFL's all-time leader in touchdown passes, throwing for four scores to lead the New Orleans Saints to a 34-7 victory over the Indianapolis Colts on Monday night.

"It was special, everything about the night," Brees said. "It just kind of makes your whole life and career flash before your eyes, because I never thought I'd have a chance to be part of something like this."

The scoring strike that broke Peyton Manning's record of 539 career touchdown passes came in the third quarter, when Brees hit tight end Josh Hill for a 5-yard score. Brees' next pass in the game was the 541st scoring toss of his career, a 28-yarder to reserve QB and utility player Taysom Hill that put the Saints up 34-0.

"He's done that to a lot of defenses," Colts coach Frank Reich said. "When he gets like that. I don't know that anybody can stop him."

Now in his 19th season, the 6-foot Brees—a 2001 second-round draft choice—came into the game already holding NFL records for completions with 6,792 and yards passing with 72,577. He built on those numbers while also setting a record for completion percentage in a game. He completed 29 of 30 passes—96.7%—for 307 yards before being relieved by Teddy Bridgewater in the fourth quarter. That broke the mark Philip Rivers had held since completing 28 of 29 (96.6%) against Arizona last season.

"He had a hot hand, obviously," Saints coach Sean Payton said. "Guys were making plays, but that's awfully difficult to do."

The victory kept the Saints (11-3), who'd already won the NFC South, in the running with Seattle (11-3), San Francisco (11-3) and Green Bay (11-3) for one of the top two seeds in the NFC playoffs.

"There's a lot at stake right now relative to these games when you look at the top of the NFC," Payton said. "It's about winning and winning and winning and trying to give



AP
New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees (9) gestures before throwing a pass in the first half of an NFL game against the Indianapolis Colts in New Orleans, Monday, Dec. 16, 2019.

yourself the best chance in the postseason."

The Colts (6-8) were eliminated from playoff contention after losing their fourth straight and sixth out of seven.

They were also left struggled to explain their lack of competitiveness in a game they needed to win.

"I wish I knew all the answers," Colts linebacker Darius Leonard said. "I hate losing more than I love winning."

Jacoby Brissett struggled at times with accuracy and finished 18 of 34 for 165 yards against a Saints defense looking for redemption after allowing 48 points in a loss to the 49ers a week earlier.

Meanwhile, Colts defenders had no answer for Michael Thomas, who caught 12 passes for 128 yards, including a 15-yard touchdown. Thomas' eighth game this season with at least 10 catches gave him 133 for the season, which is also the fourth-highest single-season total in NFL history.

With four more catches, Thomas will pass Antonio Brown and Julio Jones for second most in a season. He needs 11 to eclipse Marvin Harrison's record of 143 from 2002.

Tre'Quan Smith caught a 21-yard touchdown pass for New Orleans.

Jordan Wilkins scored the Colts' lone TD on a 1-yard run in the fourth quarter.

While Brees holds the career touchdown pass record for now, the Patriots' Tom Brady is only three behind at 538.

"It's a fluid record," Payton said. "There's still another quarterback in New England, so that will go back and forth as long as those two are playing."

The next-closest active player is Rivers with 395.

Brees wasn't about to underestimate Brady's ability to keep pace.

"He's such a stud. He's got a lot of rings and records," Brees said of Brady. "He's awesome."

Brees said the ball with which he threw his record-breaking TD would go to the Pro Football Hall of Fame and also sounded particularly pleased by who caught it.

"I love the fact it was Josh Hill," Brees said, noting that Hill made the team as an undrafted rookie in 2013 and has been reliable both on offense and special teams ever since.

Seahawks' Gordon suspended indefinitely

RENTON (AP)—The troubles that have followed Josh Gordon throughout his career continued Monday as the Seahawks wide receiver was suspended indefinitely by the NFL for violating the league's drug policy again.

Gordon tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs and "substances of abuse," the league said in a statement.

Gordon was reinstated by the NFL in August after having been suspended indefinitely in December 2018, missing the final three games of last season for violations of the league's substance abuse policy.

"My heart goes out to Josh having to face this again. The fact that he is up against it and all, it poses a great challenge to him," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. "Fortunately he'll have the great benefit of all of the league's resources to support him and help him and we'll wish him the very best in taking care of business. It's really unfortunate."

Gordon signed with New England and was among the leading receivers for the Patriots with 20 catches for 287 yards and a touchdown through six games. But he was placed on injured reserve with knee and ankle injuries and was released in late October.

Seattle stepped in and claimed the oft-troubled re-

ceiver off waivers. His first game came in Week 10 against San Francisco when Gordon made a pair of key catches late in Seattle's 27-24 overtime win. Gordon had seven receptions over five games with the Seahawks. All seven had some significance, including his 58-yard catch in Sunday's win over Carolina.

"He had impact to some extent it seemed like in every game," Carroll said. "This isn't about that. This is about Josh getting well and taking care of business."

Gordon's brief stint with Seattle likely finished with 11 targets, 139 yards receiving and one incomplete pass attempt on a trick play against the Panthers. Carroll was unclear of when the positive tests happened and said learning of Gordon's suspension was a surprise.

"We saw Josh really at a really high level the whole time he was here. The work ethic he brought was one, but his getting along with people and being good to work with and to talk to and deal with on a regular basis he was great," Carroll said. "We were not aware that there was anything to be concerned about, other than the history, which we knew about."

Gordon spoke last week with reverence about be-

ing given another chance by Seattle and the culture he stepped into with the Seahawks. He said it was a "great transition" from his release in New England to being quickly added into the fold by the Seahawks.

"I think I'm fortunate in general to have landed in a place like this with coaches like this," Gordon said. "The coaching staff, the organization from the top down, the guys, it's real family-like. It's real close, real tight-knit, real energetic group and real competitive. They love the game of football. You can see it and it's a great feeling to come back to football and enjoy what you do and then be able to have fun with it."

A 2012 second-round draft pick by the Cleveland Browns, Gordon was also suspended for the first two games of the 2013 season for a substance-abuse policy violation but still caught 87 passes for nine touchdowns and a league-leading 1,646 yards and was voted to the All-Pro team.

He has been in and out of the league since, was released by New England earlier this season and signed with Seattle in November.

This is the eighth time in his career Gordon has been suspended by the league or by his team.

NFL apologized for blown call in Raiders loss

In California, Coach Jon Gruden apologized to the fans after losing the final game in Oakland and the NFL apologized to the Raiders for a blown call that contributed to the loss.

None of that will change what was a stunning late-game collapse by the Raiders that provided a bitter finish to a 25-year run in Oakland before next season's move to Las Vegas.

The Raiders (6-8) appeared to be in position to close out the Coliseum with a win when Derek Carr kept the ball on an option and ran for a first down with 2:05 to play. Carr slid before reaching the sideline to give himself up and make sure the clock would keep running.

Instead, the official ruled him out of bounds, forcing the Raiders to run another play before the two-minute warning and giving the Jaguars an additional 40 seconds for a game-winning drive in a 20-16 victory.

Gruden said he got an apology call from NFL officiating chief Al Riveron, but was frustrated nothing could have been done at the time to rectify the mistake after seeing other calls this year get changed in New York.

Red Sox looking at Dodgers as trade partners



LOS ANGELES—Sometimes the best way to attack the market is to let it come to you.

The Red Sox didn't seem in any great rush to complete a major deal at last week's winter meetings in San Diego, in part because they recognized they weren't yet dealing from a position of strength.

Trying to move left-hander David Price when the market is flooded with pitchers isn't a recipe for maximizing your return. The same goes for the less palatable idea of trading Mookie Betts when a stud like World Series hero Anthony Rendon is still out there requiring nothing more than (a lot of) money to sign.

Fast forward a week, however, and the top end of the market suddenly features significantly more clarity. Gerrit Cole is gone. Rendon is gone. Stephen Strasburg is gone. Madison Bumgarner is gone. Zack Wheeler is long gone.

As high-end options evaporate, the teams on the outside looking in should find themselves more agreeable to talking trade with the Red Sox. And the last 48 hours, in particular, have made one potential partner even more likely to place a call to Boston—the Dodgers.

L.A. began the offseason intent on swimming in the deepest end of the free agent pool. The Dodgers made a run at Cole, but watched him sign a \$324 million deal with the Yankees. They targeted Rendon, only to have him join the crosstown Angels, in part because he had no interest in "the Hollywood lifestyle." They wanted Bumgarner, but instead will continue facing him in the division after he spurned them for the Diamondbacks.

When the meetings began, Dodgers boss Andrew



Friedman said the team was focused on roughly 12 elite players available via either free agency or trade. While the Dodgers have been one of the league's most consistent fran-

chises over the last five years, they've also become perennial bridesmaids, from losing two straight World Series to getting Howie Kendrick out of the NLDS this October.

While Friedman didn't specify which 12 players were on his list, it's safe to say Cole, Rendon, Strasburg, and Bumgarner were four of them. Cleveland's surprising trade

^{AP}
In this undated file photo, Boston Red Sox's Mookie Betts rounds the bases during the second inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Fenway Park in Boston.

of two-time Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber to the Rangers potentially takes two Indians off the market, since the roughly \$18 million in savings can be applied to franchise shortstop Francisco Lindor, another rumored target of L.A.

The next free agent to go could be former AL MVP Josh Donaldson, whom the Dodgers have reportedly engaged on, but who is expected to land with the Nationals or Braves.

So who's left? The Dodgers could re-sign defending NL ERA champ Hyun-Jin Ryu, though they seem inclined to let the 32-year-old walk away rather than guarantee him the four or five years he'll likely receive elsewhere. They could swing a deal for Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant, though Chicago's asking price is understandably expected to be through the roof.

Or they could call the Red Sox.

Multiple executives at the winter meetings connected the Dodgers to both Price and Betts last week. The former was considered untradeable when the offseason began, but that notion now appears inaccurate.

The Dodgers saw firsthand what Price can do in big moments when he dominated them twice in the 2018 World Series, a performance that should've won him the MVP instead of Steve Pearce. Even more importantly, Price has a longstanding relationship with Friedman, who picked him No. 1 overall in the 2007 MLB Draft and then promoted him to the big leagues a year later,

just in time to record key outs in the ALCS against the Red Sox en route to Tampa's only World Series appearance.

Friedman knew Price when he was considered a tremendous teammate, and before he committed a series of high-profile missteps in Boston that needn't be rehashed here. It's fair to say his view of the pitcher is more favorable than that of Boston fans, which makes Price a classic change-of-scenery candidate, presuming his surgically repaired wrist and iffy elbow can pass a physical at age 34.

The Red Sox will almost certainly subsidize a huge chunk of the three years and \$96 remaining on Price's contract. As the Dodgers get shut out of the rest of the starting pitching market, a Friedman reunion becomes more intriguing.

Then again, if the medicals scare them off, or if they find a pitcher in free agency, there's still Betts. The former AL MVP only fits so many payrolls next season, when he'll make close to \$30 million. The Dodgers are one of them, however. And as we laid out earlier this offseason, they have the talent in their farm system to acquire him if they're willing to gamble that he'll re-sign in L.A. next fall.

There's still time for L.A. to land someone, and it's hard to imagine them being shut out, but then again, we're already halfway there. The names on their list are vanishing like so many beamed-up Trekkies, which puts the Red Sox in a position of power.

Chaim Bloom and Co. appear content to play the long game. Perhaps it pays off when the phone rings and it's Friedman, his old boss, wondering if he has a minute to talk about some big names.

MELBOURNE—Tiger Woods, first-time captain of the United States' Presidents Cup team, chose himself to fill one of the four wild-card spots back in November. It was the first time a captain had ever picked himself as a wild-card, and it's a bet that paid off.

Over the weekend at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club, the U.S. team won 16-14, with Woods himself going 3-0. What made the win ever sweeter was that the U.S. had to stage a comeback on the final day—the first Sunday comeback in Presidents Cup history.

There were certainly younger golfers who could have gone in Woods' place, and ones with fewer recent injuries. Woods had knee surgery in August that caused him to

Tiger makes right choice in Presidents Cup

miss two months, and he was only able to get back into competition in October.

With a recent surgery looming over him, would he be healthy enough to compete? Would he be an asset to his team, or a liability? Even with his win at the Zozo Championship in late October—which tied the record for career PGA Tour victories—there had to be someone Woods was overlooking in favor of himself, right?

No one knows Tiger like Tiger, though. He knew he was ready for it, and he was right. He won two points on Sunday (including the very first one of the day), which brought him to a perfect 3-0 for the tourna-

ment, and gave him the all-time record for Presidents Cup match wins. He was feeling so confident as he finished his final match of the day that he even took off his hat as the ball was dropping in the hole.

He didn't just celebrate himself, though. As a first-time captain, he lived and died with every point, and had big smiles and bear hugs for his teammates when it was over.

After the U.S. sealed its come-from-behind victory, Woods held back tears.

"We did it together. We came here as a team," Woods said, via Golfweek. "My team-

mates and my boys all played well. The captains did an amazing job of being there of just being there for every little detail. I couldn't have done it with all of their help. All of my boys. They did it."

Golf is a solitary sport, and Tiger has a lot of solitary wins. At the Presidents Cup on Sunday, Woods got to share in the victory with his teammates, a rarity in golf.

"I've cried in pretty much every Cup we've won," he told Golfweek. "I've been doing this a long time. Any time you have moments where you're able to do something that is bigger than us as an individual,

is so much more meaningful and so much more special."

Els could captain again

Meanwhile, Ernie Els said he might be like a crack at being Presidents Cup captain again in 2021 after seeing his young International team fall to an agonizing defeat.

The big South African spent months plotting a way to topple the United States for only the second time in Presidents Cup history after playing in the only team to achieve the feat in 1998, also at Royal Melbourne.

"We will see ... I'm not sure yet," said Els in the aftermath of a defeat made all the more painful by his side never being behind until the pivotal Sunday singles.

"We'll have to discuss that. There's been a lot of work going in this. I love these guys."

His charges had nothing but praise for the way Els went about his business, schooling them on the treacherous Royal Melbourne course, where he holds the course record.

"He had a system going in. We are his soldiers, so we follow his instruction," said Taiwan's CT Pan of Taiwan, one of seven rookies in the youngest team in Presidents Cup history.

On rankings alone, to run a US team stacked with major champions and top 10 players so close was an achievement not to be overlooked, said Els.

"If you compare our team on paper with other teams in other sport, you would have laughed us out of the building," said Els.



2011 World Cup team to open Olympic torch relay

TOKYO (AP)—Members of the Japan soccer team that won the Women's World Cup in 2011 will be the first to carry the torch for the Tokyo Olympics when the relay opens its Japanese leg on March 26, 2020.



The relay is to begin in J-Village in Fukushima prefecture, located about 250 kilometers (150 miles) north of Tokyo. The area was devastated on March 11, 2011, by an earthquake, tsunami, and the subsequent meltdown of three

nuclear reactors.

Organizers made the announcement on Tuesday but did not say which player—or players—would be the first to carry the torch. The torch will go to all 47 Japanese prefectures, and 858 municipalities.

Former coach Norio Sasaki has also been asked to be part of the relay.

The torch will be carried by torchbearers most of the way, but will be transported by train, boat or cable car between legs.

The torch relay will kick off in Fukushima, the northern prefecture devastated almost nine years ago by an earthquake, tsunami and the subsequent meltdown of three nuclear reactors.

The torch relay will take in several World Heritage Sites including Mt. Fuji and the Itsukushima shrine—known as the Floating Shrine—in Hiroshima prefecture.

The torch will be lit on March 12 in Greece.

They'll also play Olympic baseball and softball next year in one part of Fukushima, allowing Tokyo organizers and the Japanese government to label these games the "Recovery Olympics." The symbolism recalls the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, which showcased Japan's reemergence just 19 years after World War II.

But tens of thousands still haven't recovered in Fukushima, displaced by nuclear radiation and unable to return to deserted places like Futaba.

Time stopped in the town of 7,100 when disaster struck on March 11, 2011.

Laundry still hangs from the second floor of one house. Vermin gnaw away at once intimate family spaces, exposed



AP

Tadahiro Nomura, an ambassador to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and former judo Olympic medalist, wearing the torch runner's uniform, holds a torch during an event to unveil the Olympics torch relay route in Tokyo Saturday, June 1, 2019.

through shattered windows and mangled doors. The desolation is deepened by Japanese tidiness with shoes waiting in doorways for absent owners.

"This recovery Olympics is in name only," Toshihide Yoshida told The Associated

Press. He was forced to abandon Futaba and ended up living near Tokyo. "The amount of money spent on the Olympics should have been used for real reconstruction."

Olympic organizers say they are spending \$12.6 billion on

the Olympics, about 60% public money. However, an audit report by the national governments says overall spending is about twice that much.

The government has spent 34.6 trillion yen (\$318 billion) for reconstruction projects for the disaster-hit northern prefectures, and the Fukushima plant decommissioning is expected to cost 8 trillion yen (\$73 billion).

The Olympic torch relay will start in March in J-Village, a soccer stadium used as an emergency response hub for Fukushima plant workers. The relay goes to 11 towns hit by the disaster, but bypasses Futaba, a part of Fukushima that Olympic visitors will never see.

"I would like the Olympic torch to pass Futaba to show the rest of the world the reality of our hometown," Yoshida said. "Futaba is far from recovery."

The radiation that spewed from the plant at one point displaced more than 160,000 people. Futaba is the only one of 12 radiation-hit towns that remains a virtual no-go zone. Only daytime visits are allowed for decontamination and reconstruction work, or for former residents to check their abandoned homes.

FITIAL

From Page 28

Tech's P.J. Litulumar.

In the Gi competition, the other gold medalists were Trench Tech's Kier Agda, Vince Masga, Isaac Han, and Lo Itibus.

Itibus took the top honors in the ladies white belt after

winning against Skye Han and Louise Villagomez, while Isaac got the gold in the kids 10 to 14 age group category following his victory over Edward Diaz and Drey Rador.

In the purple belt, Masga downed Shane, while in the blue belt, Agda outclassed Mark Nuique and Taitingfong.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Skye Han, Lo Itibus, and Louise Villagomez pose with their medals during the awards presentation for the Art of War 14 Grappling Submission Challenge last Saturday at the Trench Tech Gym in Garapan.

BLUE

From Page 28

lock at the break, 44-all, headed into the final frame with the eventual winning team gaining momentum.

Vision RNV tried to rally in the fourth canto behind Errol Peredo, Elmer Esdrelon, Junar Guiab, and Tristan Cosino, who had two field goals apiece in the decider. However, the Blue Eagle kept up with

Vision RNV in scoring with Basa still waxing hot from beyond the arc and drawing help from Schmidt and Ashburn, who made 4 points apiece in the final canto. Bart Demapan and De Guzman also scored in the fourth, adding one field goal apiece.

De Guzman finished with 20 markers, while Schmidt, Manolo Manalo, and Ashburn also delivered twin digits for the Blue Eagle after recording

13, 11, and 10 markers.

The win was the second in as many games for Blue Eagle, while Vision RNV has yet to make it to the win column after two matches.

Peredo had a game-high 27 markers in his debut with Vision RNV and had his best scoring output in the second quarter after registering 12 points. Cosino added 20, tallying 13 of them in the first canto to lift RNV to a 23-20

lead before he was held to three field goals the rest of the game.

Blue Eagle 88—Basa 21, De Guzman 20, Schmidt 13, Manolo 11, Ashburn 10, Lizama 6, Barbo 6, Demapan 2.

Vision RNV 84—Peredo 27, Cosino 20, Esdrelon 11, De Dios 10, Guiab 6, Rueda 5, Agustin 5.

Scoring by quarters: 20-23, 44-44, 65-60, 88-84.

SOUTHERN

From Page 28

only three players with Marielle Gariguez making two after getting her first in the 33rd and the second in the 46th. Mari-

elle's sibling, Marilou Arriola, also scored in the second half with her shot in the 48th, while Shirley's lone goal in the first half was courtesy of Heather Zona in the 23rd minute.

Meanwhile, in the battle for

third place, TanHoldings also earned an easy win after shutting down Kanoa, 12-0.

TanHoldings set up the blowout after firing eight goals in the first half. Rizza Relucio led TanHoldings' ear-

ly assault after recording four goals, while Julie Ann Capayas added two, and siblings Tamia and Tyana Hix contributed one apiece.

Despite handing TanHold-

ings a big advantage, Relucio was not done yet, as she posted three more goals, while Capayas chipped in one to complete their domination of Kanoa.

TanHoldings and Shirley's

received trophies for placing third and second in Division B, while Southern United players got medals besides the championship trophy during the brief awards ceremony.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Shirley's Football Club players and coach Mia Carreon, second left, are joined in the photo by Northern Mariana Island Football Association president Jerry Tan, left, and D&Q Saipan regional sales manager Marilyn Marron, right, during the awards presentation.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Southern United players and coach Ruselle Zapanta, seventh left, pose with their championship trophy after beating Shirley's Football Club, 9-4, in the title game in Division B of the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex. The trophy was presented by Northern Mariana Island Football Association president Jerry Tan, left, and Marilyn Marron, standing third right, regional sales manager of D&Q Saipan—the distributor of Dove products on island.



Mavs end
Bucks' 18-game
winning streak

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune Sports

Brees sets TD
mark as Saints
crush Colts

PAGE 25



28 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Southern United dominates



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Southern United Football Club eased its way to a 9-4 title win over Shirley's Football Club in Division B of the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Dove
Women's League

Southern United pulled away in the second half of the finale to finish the season undefeated and secure the division championship. Keisha Deleon Guerrero scored two of Southern United's six goals in the final 25 minutes of the title match to break the game wide open. Her pair of goals posted in the 36th and 42nd minute allowed Deleon Guerrero to earn a hat trick in the finale, as she earlier hit the back of the net in the first half (12th minute).

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Southern United Football Club's Mariana Castro, left, dribbles in front of Shirley's Football Club's Heather Zona during the second half of their Division B title match in the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Four other Southern United players lit up the board in the finals, making it hard for Shirley's defense to decide how to neutralize its

opponents with the eventual champion team having multiple options on offense.

Tricia Roque and Nathanette Blas added two goals for Southern United with the latter scoring in the ninth and 30th minute and the former doing the same in the 18th and 38th. Mariana Castro contributed one goal in the 28th minute, while Erin Frink closed out for Southern with her conversion in the 44th.

Shirley's drew goals from
**See SOUTHERN on
Page 27**

Fitia, Harris stand out in Art of War 14

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Mariana Elite's Kevin Fitia and Purebred Guam's Davis Harris notched two gold medals in the Art of War 14 Grappling Submission Challenge held last Saturday at the Trench Tech Gym in Garapan.

Fitia topped the BJJ Gi Absolute white belt category and also placed first in the heavy-weight class of the Gi contest. The Marianas Elite fighter won the gold medal in the white belt division after beating Get Fit's Jose Quan, while Trench Tech's Frankie Muna rounded out the Top 3 in the competition.

In the Gi heavyweight division, Fitia prevailed against Purebred Guam's Ollie Cruz and ZengZung's Joshua Castro. Meanwhile, Harris ruled



Heavyweight class gold medalist Kelvin Fitia, center, is joined in the podium by runner-up Ollie Cruz, left, and Joshua Castro during the awards ceremony for the Art of War 14 Grappling Submission Challenge last Saturday at the Trench Tech Gym in Garapan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

two weight classes in the Gi competition. In the middleweight, the Guam BJJ practitioner defeated Rage MMA's Vince Torres and Trench Tech's Vince Masga. In the lightweight, Harris downed siblings Alverick and Shane Alvarez.

After falling short in the lightweight class, Shane took the gold medal in the featherweight division. Cruz and Alverick settled for the silver and bronze medals, respectively.

In other results in the Gi contest, Trench Tech's Giovanni Taitingfong and Japan's Misaki Kitami won their respective divisions.

Taitingfong defeated fellow Trench Tech standout in the bantamweight class, while Kitami reigned supreme in the flyweight category, winning over independent fighter Brandon Tenorio and Trench

See FITIAL on Page 27



KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Blue Eagle's Darwin Barbo goes up for an uncontested layup during their game against Vision RNV in the Open Division of the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League last Thursday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Blue Eagle slips past Vision RNV

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REPORTER

Blue Eagle outclassed Vision RNV, 88-84, in the Open Division game in the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League last Thursday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Preston Basa top-scored for Blue Eagle with his 21 points despite failing to hit a basket in the first period. He earned all his points from the 3-point area and drilled three triples in the fourth quarter to keep Blue Eagle in the

lead. Andrew Ashburn and Douglas Schmidt also hit timely baskets in the fourth period to help ward off Vision RNV.

The final quarter started with Blue Eagle holding on to a 65-60 advantage, thanks to Jaymark De Guzman's 8 points in the third period and two triples from Basa. With De Guzman and Basa working together in the penultimate quarter and five more Blue Eagle players scoring, the game that ended in a dead-

See BLUE on Page 27

